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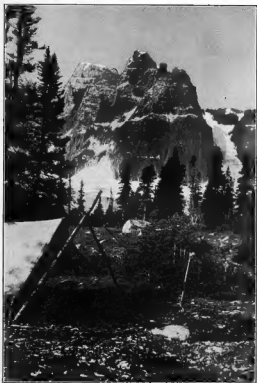
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Camping in the Tonquin

JUNGLING IN JASPER

The Thunder Bird



A Mark of Canadian Quality

JUNGLING IN JASPER

BY

LAWRENCE J. BURPEE



THE GRAPHIC PUBLISHERS LIMITED
OTTAWA, CANADA

FIRST EDITION

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TO THE MEMORY OF
PERCY HAMILTON GOODAIR

WARDEN OF THE TONGUE, WHO WAS KILLED
BY A GRIZZLY IN SEPTEMBER, 1929. HE WAS
A LOVER OF THE MOUNTAINS, A LOYAL
MEMBER OF THE PARKS SERVICE, A
RARE COMPANION & A FRIEND
IN A MILLION



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CHAPTER I.

JASPER HOUSE



IT WAS a glorious day in late August. I lay comfortably in the long grass, my head pillowed against the mound that marked the site of Jasper House, once a post of the Hudson's Bay Company. Lazily my eyes roved about the familiar scene, from meadow and woodland up to where battalions of pines climbed the shoulders of the encircling hills; up to the grim summits of Roche Miette, Roche De Smet and their companions; up again to the splendour of far-off, glittering peaks. It was good to be back once more in the heart of the Canadian Rockies.

One would be both ungrateful and disingenuous to pretend to regret the days spent at Jasper Lodge, with its exquisite setting of lake and mountains, its rustic log cabins equipped with bath-rooms, electric light and telephones, its delightful lounge and perfectly-appointed meals, its swimming pool and its incomparable golf course, not forgetting that very short trick hole with the whaleback green and deep bunkers on either side, a devilish contrivance designed to turn a promising ninety

into something over the century. But, after all, Jasper Lodge is not quite the right preparation for a real expedition into the mountains, a trip off the trail. It is too comfortable, too luxurious, to form an abrupt stepping-stone to the Spartan simplicity of camp life. There should be some intermediate phase, to let one down a little more easily. "Yes," I thought to myself, as I blew smoke rings at a pertinacious mosquito and listened to the drowsy murmur of pebbles in the bed of the Athabaska, "too luxurious,—much too luxurious! Not at all the—"

Suddenly, I sat up and turned toward the river. The water's edge was hidden by high banks, but from below came the sound of voices and the soft grating of a canoe at the landing-place, and then the tramp of feet on the shingle and the clatter of pebbles as they climbed the steep path. In a moment or two, a head appeared above the bank. Up it came, followed by a decidedly fat body, until the entire man stood before me, puffing good-naturedly and mopping his streaming face. He seemed to be a middle-aged man of medium height; he was clean-shaven and had benevolent blue eyes, in the depths of which there lurked an irresistible gleam of humour.

As soon as he had recovered his breath, he came forward with hand outstretched.

"These glorious summer days," he said,—"for which God be praised!—are nevertheless a little hard on a man whose bones are a trifle too well covered. My men and I," and he turned with a kindly gesture toward the two wiry voyageurs who had followed him up the bank, "have had a long tussle with the Athabaska since day-break, and now we are hoping that our good friend, Colin Fraser, will give us some breakfast, although it is now the middle of the morning. Fasting would doubtless do more good than harm to a man of my corpulency, but then," with a twinkle, "Louis and François are not fat, and they feel that they have fasted long enough. Ah!" and he sprang forward with surprising agility, "Here is Colin himself."

I turned to see coming out of the door of Jasper House a short, thickset Highlander, with a shock of red hair and a red beard, framing a face in which one could read a curious mixture of fiery impatience and good nature. Impulsively he ran forward and grasped the hand of the visitor.

"Father De Smet!" he cried. "It is good indeed to see you once more. You come from Edmonton. What is the news?"

"All are well there, the estimable Dr. Rowand and his people. The Russian furs were expected there at any hour. Ah! that I had one year's tribute of those furs

for my poor missions! There are times when I would almost wish to play Robin Hood to that convoy. 'Twould be robbery in a good cause, without doubt," and he turned with mock seriousness to Colin, in whose eye sparkled a gleam which the shrewd Father had no difficulty in interpreting.

"Colin! Colin! Thou unregenerate Highlandman. Thou wouldst not be averse to it, I do believe, but that thou dost owe allegiance to the Hudson's Bay Company "

Colin grunted non-committally, but was saved from any more precise answer by the appearance of his wife, a good-looking Cree, who shyly returned the missionary's greeting and urged him to come into the fort and break his fast. Behind her peeped two bright-eyed little Frasers, the one with his father's *capot rouge*, the other having her mother's raven locks.

No sooner did Father De Smet catch sight of them than, with a shout of welcome, he tossed them up on to either broad shoulder and ran with them back to the top of the bank.

"Now," he said, as he dropped them to the ground, "see which of you can get first to the canoe "

He watched with delight as they scrambled down the bank, and clapped his hands as the nimble-footed little girl won.

"Look under the tarpaulin," he cried, "and you will find a small leather bag. Bring it up to me."

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They ran up the steep pathway, carrying the bag between them, and laid it down before him, then watched with solemn eyes while he groped about among its miscellaneous contents until, finally, he dragged out a small tin. When he took off the cover and showed them that it was filled with lumps of sugar, they were so overpowered with the sight of such incredible luxury that they could only stare, open mouthed. Into each mouth he popped a lump and watched with keenest enjoyment the look of ecstasy that took possession of each little face.

Hand in hand, they walked back to the fort, while they answered his questions as to what they had been doing through the long summer days, and how fared their pets, the baby bear, the tame porcupine, and the whisky-jack. The bear, it appeared, had outgrown its babyhood, had been caught red-handed breaking into the family cache, and had been consumed with last winter's meat. The porcupine had presumed once too often upon its immunity from attack, had been turned over quickly by a cunning dog and devoured by the pack. The whisky-jack was still alive but always in disgrace because of its thievish habits. Father had got into a rage with it the other day for dragging his steak off the plate on to the floor, and had threatened to kill it. They had had to hide the naughty bird in the storage loft.

The word "steak" reminded the missionary that that was what he particularly needed at the present moment, and he hurried into the living room.

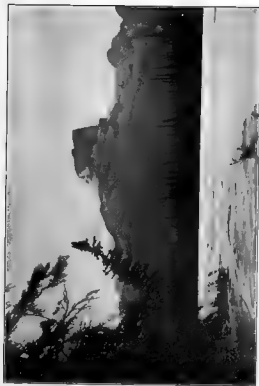
"You're in luck, Father!" cried Colin. "We thought we'd have to give you fish on Saturday, but a hunter came in not ten minutes ago with a big-horn. You can smell it sizzling on the fire."

"The Saints be praised!" said Father De Smet. "Never did a poor missionary feel in greater need of a juicy steak. See that you don't let the whisky-jack get at it before I do!"

"Who told you of the damn ? Excuse me, Father! I very nearly swore and who would not at that—" Colin grew red in the face, in the effort to bottle up his indignation.

"Far be it from me, Colin, to compromise with sin, but there's a worldly old saying: 'If you must choose between two evils, take the lesser.' It would be better, Colin, to relieve your feelings with an honest open 'Damn!' than to mutter it under your breath and maybe burst a blood vessel to boot. But here comes that very good wife of yours, with a rarer dish than that which Rebecca imposed upon Isaac."

While they were still eating, a half-breed guide appeared in the doorway, saying that he had been sent forward, by a traveller from the east named Paul Kane,



Rocke Muella

a friend of the Governor's, to bring horses, since their boat had been blown out of the water by a hurricane. Colin gave the necessary orders to one of his men and then followed him, muttering: "And I do not know who Paul Kane may be, but if he is a friend of the Governor, I had better see to it myself "

The missionary had lighted his pipe, and now, pulling a chair over to the window, watched with silent amusement the efforts of the irascible trader to round up his horses in the enclosure. There could be little doubt as to the character of the language that Colin was using, but the good man knew the limitations of human nature and charitably shut his ears. Presently the horses were secured and saddled, and they and Colin disappeared down the trail

"Come here, children!" said Father De Smet. "Come now and let me hear how much you know of your catechism, and afterwards, perhaps, I will tell you a story."

They stood before him gravely and answered his questions, and then waited expectantly.

"Well," he said, "I suppose you are waiting for that story? What shall it be about? Shall I tell you a tale about the cunning trick the beaver played on the porcupine?"

They nodded

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"Well, you might not think so, but the beaver and the porcupine are cousins in the animal world. If you took off the porcupine's overcoat of quills, you would find that he has underneath a soft fur coat like the beaver. Now the Indians say that long, long ago the beaver and the porcupine were more than cousins, they were brothers and lived together in the same lodge. But even in those days the porcupine was lazy and hated the water, while the beaver was hard-working and not only liked to be in the water but had learned to build a place underneath to which he could escape when hard pressed by his enemies.

"This sort of thing could not go on very long without causing trouble between the beaver and the porcupine. Like industrious people, the beaver was not content to bustle around himself, but felt that every one else should be equally busy. It annoyed him very much to see Brother Porcupine indolently basking in the sun, while he himself was feverishly cutting down trees with his sharp teeth, dividing them into small sections, rolling them down to the water's edge, storing them away in his snug underwater dwelling, repairing his dam or making it larger and more secure. What made it worse, much worse, was that the porcupine would every now and then wake up, waddle over to where the beaver was working, watch him with a sort of superior air, and then offer him advice; and as often as not he would walk off with a

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juicy piece of juniper tree, in spite of the beaver's indignant protests.

"Finally, the beaver made up his mind that he could stand the annoying ways of the porcupine no longer. He had thrown out a good many hints that both of them would be happier if the porcupine would go quite a long way off and build a home of his own, but the porcupine, who was a bit of a fraud, as well as very lazy, said that he could not think of deserting his brother, the beaver. The beaver flapped his tail impatiently, and thought: 'Very well, Mr. Porcupine! if you will not part yourself from me, I shall have to find a way of parting myself from you.'

"The beaver, you know, is a very clever animal; no other animal is more clever; so that it did not take him very long to think of a way of getting rid of his troublesome brother. The next morning he woke the porcupine quite early, and invited him to go for a walk. At first the porcupine was angry. He did not like being awakened too early, and he was not fond of walking. However, when the beaver explained that he knew where there was a splendid feast of savoury buds of cypress and tender juniper bark, his face brightened and he rattled his quills with delight.

"They started off through the forest, the beaver leading the way, with the porcupine hard upon his heels.

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The beaver hurried along as if he had not a moment to lose, and the porcupine, who was fat and not used to running, soon got out of breath and begged his brother not to go so fast. The beaver explained that if they did not hurry some one else might find the cypress buds and the juniper bark and eat them all before they got to the place. The thought that he might be too late for the feast made the porcupine so anxious that he waddled along the trail much faster than he had ever gone before. But after a while even that thought could not keep him on his feet. He sank down against a tree, panting so hard that he shook a squirrel off one of its branches. The squirrel scolded him fiercely, and the unfortunate porcupine was so exhausted that he could only gasp and make faces, which made the squirrel more angry than ever. Finally, the beaver boxed his ears and told him to go home.

"After the porcupine had rested a little and recovered his breath, the beaver told him sharply that they must hurry forward or they would certainly be too late. On they went down the long trail, mile after mile, much farther than the porcupine had ever before travelled. In fact, he had come into a country that was quite unknown to him. He was getting so tired that he did not see how he could put one foot in front of the other. Whenever the porcupine begged the beaver to stop, he

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replied that they were nearly there. At last, when the porcupine could really go no farther, his companion pointed to a little grove of juniper and cypress trees. The porcupine dragged his weary limbs to the nearest tree and sank down in its grateful shade. He was much too tired to climb the tree, he was too tired even to pick up the buds that had fallen from its branches.

"The beaver told him to rest himself, while he ran down to a neighbouring creek for a refreshing swim. When he got back, the porcupine was feeling much better. He had eaten all the buds on the ground and was about to climb up into the cypress tree for more. The beaver sat down to watch him, munching betimes a number of tender shoots he had brought up with him from the river bank. The porcupine ate and ate and ate, until all the buds were gone. Then he climbed down the cypress tree and up a juniper tree, from which he proceeded to strip the tender inner bark. He ate and ate and ate, until the greedy fellow was so full that he could no longer cling to the tree. Down he fell, fortunately on a soft bed of moss. When the beaver walked over to him and asked him if he were hurt, there was no reply, except a snore. The porcupine was sound asleep, so sound asleep that when the beaver called him he made no answer, and when the beaver tickled his nose he sneezed but did not awaken. The beaver stood

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beside him for a moment, and then he said. 'Well, good-bye, Brother Porcupine! I don't think I shall ever see you again', and he started back down the long trail that led to his home "

The children begged for another story, but the missionary told them that they must first earn it by learning their lessons. He left them, and wandered down the trail to meet the stranger from the east. The day was hot, however, and he was glad to seek shelter under the branches of an ancient tree that stood on the bank of the river. He sat down and mopped his face and thought of that difficult tribe, the Blackfeet—which he had hoped to convert to his own faith. His mind ran back over incidents of his journey, some of them grave, others quite the reverse, and he found himself chuckling over predicaments in which he had been, more or less, the victim. To others, they might have seemed exasperating or mortifying, but this man had the saving sense of humour. He wondered if it were a fault in his nature that he found it so easy to see the whimsical thread that is running through the sad-coloured garment of life, but knew in his heart that it was not. That sense of humour often saved him from despair or discouragement and gave him courage to carry on his work. They were simple-minded children, most of these people among whom his lot was cast, white men as well as red, and they were very dear to him.

He realized suddenly that he had been dozing, and glanced around to see a black-bearded stranger beside an easel, who peremptorily waved his pencil at him as he sat up, and told him to keep still. Father De Smet stared in mingled amazement and amusement, but did as he was told. After a time, his patience was rewarded. The artist took a step back, glanced from the sketch to the subject and back again, and nodded his satisfaction. The missionary scrambled to his feet and held out his hand.

"You are, I presume, Mr. Paul Kane?"

"Yes," replied the artist, "and I hope you will forgive the liberty I have taken in making a drawing of the Missionary of the Rocky Mountains in his own domain?"

"Willingly, though you caught me at a time when men seldom look their best, and I would not wish to pose as the Sleeping Missionary. What has become of Colin Fraser and the horses?"

"They have gone ahead to the Fort. I lagged behind to make a few sketches of these glorious mountains."

As they followed the trail to Jasper House, Paul Kane told the missionary something of his long journey across the continent from Toronto, and showed him a few of his sketches of Indians. Father De Smet examined with particular interest the pictures of Blackfoot chiefs and medicine men and their ceremonial dances,

and the two were soon engrossed in an animated discussion of native clothing, pipes and medicine bags, the significance of the various dances, and the characteristics of the different tribes.

The trading post seemed to be in a turmoil, as they came out of the trees into the clearing, and apparently the entire population was hurrying down to the river bank, where a fleet of canoes was drawn up on the shingle. Up the steep path came a line of stalwart voyageurs carrying packs of furs. Colin, excitedly gesticulating, led them to the store room. As he came out again, the Father stopped him.

"What now, Colin? Who are these, and what is all the excitement about?"

"The special convoy with the Russian furs," replied Colin.

"Oho!" said the priest. "The rich convoy we were planning to loot!"

"Not I," replied Colin, dryly.

"Except by implication," said Father De Smet, who liked to have the last word.

The precious cargo having been safely stowed away for the night, the officer in charge and his voyageurs were presented to the missionary, and then the entire party made their way to the big living-room of Jasper House, where they had supper and gathered about the fire with their pipes.

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"Colin," said the priest, "you were Sir George Simpson's piper when you first came out to this country, were you not?"

"I was, Your Reverence, and indeed I piped the Governor all the way across the continent. I was not much more than a boy, but I could play the pipes with any man. Sir George, though he was not Sir George then, loved the pipes, and loves them still. Why shouldn't he? He may not be born a Highlander, but he has a Highlander's love of real music. I played for him when we set forth from York Factory; I played when he landed at Norway House, and at Cumberland, at Ile à la Crosse and at Chipewyan, and beyond the mountains at Fort St. James and at Kamloops, and when we came to our journey's end at Vancouver on the Columbia. Always I played at night, wherever we might be, in fort or camp; dirge or strathspey or reel—the Governor would have one or another—but mostly he would call for something lively. Sometimes I played while we paddled, to cheer the poor canoeemen for the Governor was always restless to go faster. He was a furious traveller. No crew could paddle fast enough for him. I would play for the voyageurs, and they would sing some of the songs of old Quebec, but it did not go very well. The pipes would be right, of course, but the singing and the stroke of the paddles would be out of

time with the pipes. Poor men, they did not know any better, but the pipes cheered them. Yes, the pipes cheered them mightily that is certain. At Fort St James, when we landed, I played in front of the Governor as we marched up to the gate. I was in my right Highland dress, and I played the 'March of the Clans'. The place was full of Indians, but when they heard the glorious music of the pipes, they turned and fled in terror. Such music was too much for their poor souls. At Kamloops, there was a lassie with violet eyes, for whom I played a certain lament—" Colin looked about him absent-mindedly filled his pipe, and fell into gloomy silence.

"Such things are better forgotten," murmured the priest, and turned to Paul Kane. "Monsieur," he said, wishing to bring the somewhat taciturn artist into the conversation, "did you by any chance meet with the good Protestant missionary, Mr Rundle, in the course of your travels? He it was," and his eyes twinkled wickedly, 'who was robbed of two dollars by Colin's man, Jean Baptiste. And when I had made Jean Baptiste promise to restore the money, he demanded a receipt from the minister because, he said, Saint Peter would not let him enter heaven without it, and then he would have to run all over hell to find the minister. A shocking scoundrel, that Jean Baptiste. Was he not, Colin?"

Colin grunted non-committingly.

"Yes," said Kane, "I met Mr Rundle at Fort Carlton, and we rode together from there to Edmonton. He had a favourite cat, which he insisted upon bringing with him on horseback, much to the discomfort of himself, the cat, and the horse. Most of the Indians had never seen a domestic cat before and they crowded about him whenever we stopped. He had tied the cat by a string to the pommel of his saddle and had her safely, as he thought, concealed within his *capote*. The excitement of the Indians, however, got the horse into a state of nervousness, and it plunged about so violently that the cat sprang suddenly out of the *capote*, to the utter astonishment of the Indians, who could not imagine where she had come from. The string brought her up against the horse's flanks, which she immediately attacked with tooth and claw. The horse, of course, became furious, kicking so violently that poor Rundle was thrown over its head, but fortunately he was not injured. The string broke, and puss's life, or one of her nine lives, was saved. After that it seemed best to let her come along in one of the boats."

They sat in a circle, some on chairs, some on the floor, smoking and gazing at the fire on the hearth. For a time, no one spoke. It was a windless night, and through the open door and windows came the drowsy

murmur of the river. Suddenly, Colin sprang from his seat and rushed to the door, yelling excitedly.

"Those damn' Indians are at it again!"

After him crowded traders and voyageurs, artist and missionary, Cree wife, children, and dogs. The storehouse was in flames and by its light a party of mounted Indians could be seen galloping up the trail of the Snake Indian River. Each Indian carried before him a pack of furs, and as Colin caught sight of them, he wailed:

"They're off with the Russian otters! After them, all of you!"

He threw open the gate of the enclosure, rushed madly in, and drove the horses toward the gate. Neighing and stamping, they swirled out into the open, and as each horse passed it was mounted by trader, voyageur, artist, missionary, Cree wife, or child, and the entire party, led by Colin, went helter-skelter up the trail. Finding myself deserted, I rushed wildly after the last horse, caught it by the tail, pulled myself on to its flanks and was about to grab its mane when the earth seemed to open under us, and down we went—down down—with that sickening sensation of falling through space. Far in the distance I could hear Colin shouting. What was he shouting? "Co-o-me and get it!" I sat up, rubbing my eyes, and saw before me the grinning face of the Warden.

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"Well," he said, "what about breakfast? Haven't you seen enough of the ruins of Jasper House?"

I glanced about. There certainly was nothing there (but a grassy mound, with the remains of an ancient chimney.)

"Yes," I replied, "breakfast let it be!"

CHAPTER II

THE JUMPING OFF PLACE



NOW that we have got back to realities, let me introduce the members of our party, men and horses, and explain where we were and why.

We were a party of eleven—three men and eight horses. The men were the Warden, Bill and myself. The Warden and I had, a few years previously, spent a very agreeable fortnight together the story of which was told in *On the Old Athabasca Trail*. Our mutual friend Bill, who knew more than any other man about the district through which we intended to travel, had been persuaded to join us on the present occasion. Of the horses, the Warden's mount was known as Rastus, Bill rode the Black Prince, and my own amiable companion answered to the names of Shamrock or Irish. The five pack animals were Rod, Buck, Blaze, Echo and Robert the Devil, Echo was the only lady in the party. No one really knew how she got her curious name, but Bill suggested that it was because she talked so much,

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and the Warden's guess was that it was given to her to soothe her vanity. I retorted that both explanations were like some of the jokes in *Punch*—so subtle that no one could fathom them. With the exception of Robert the Devil, also known as Robert Bruce, Robert Burns, The Rabbit, The White Mouse, and Bobby Jones—the last because of the unerring precision of his drives with the left back hoof—the horses all proved to be well-intentioned and, on the whole, well-behaved. When they did give trouble, it was usually at the instigation and under the real, though not always open, leadership of that wicked little reprobate, of whom more, shall be told later.

Jasper House, or the site of it, lies on the west side of the Athabaska River, a little above the mouth of the Snake Indian, in Jasper Park, the most northerly of Canada's splendid national playgrounds in the Rocky Mountains. (Roche De Smet towers above it and Roche Miette lies immediately opposite,) The Snake Indian rises not far from the northern boundary of the Park, and our plan was to follow it and one of its branches to Rock Slide Pass and over it to the Smoky River, which lies outside the Park, and then to swing back into Jasper by a more westerly route, crossing several mountain passes to the upper waters of the Snake Indian and the Snaring, arriving finally at Dominion Creek, which would

bring us down to the Miette. From there we would climb up into the Tonquin Valley by one route and back to headquarters by another. Part of the way we would have good trails, but much of it would be well off the beaten track, through an almost unknown section of the Park, where we would have to make our own trails, "jungling" as it is called in the mountains. This roundabout route, while not so spectacular, except at its latter end, as some other parts of Jasper, offers a great variety of mountain scenery—peaks and gorges and mountain torrents, glaciers and Alpine meadows, precipices and deep valleys. The upper waters of the Snake Indian and the Smoky drain a hunter's paradise, a region abounding in big game—grizzlies, caribou, deer, big-horn and mountain goat. It was then too early in the year to shoot them, except with a camera, and there were not so many of them about as there would be a month or so later, but we were hoping to see at least some of the wild inhabitants of that picturesque country.

After a long rail journey from the east, the Warden and Bill had met me at the Jasper station and we had driven over to the Lodge to talk over our plans. I do not know anything more utterly restful and refreshing than to escape from the heat in August, and the noise and dust of a railway-train, wash the cinders out of one's system in a swimming-pool, eat a well-cooked and well-

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served meal, and then settle down in a comfortable arm chair on the verandah of the Lodge, with a pipe and a couple of congenial companions, to plan a jungling trip into the heart of the mountains. The surroundings were ideal for the purpose: the air was sparkling and invigorating, the sky without a cloud; below us lay an exquisite lake, with cool pine slopes and rocky peaks in the background. Everyone about looked happy and contented. How, indeed, could they look otherwise, with the Rockies all about them, the heat and the stuffiness and the meanness of the cities left far behind? I remembered how, a few hours before, as we were climbing up the grade, and peak after peak rose above the horizon in stately grandeur, those fine lines of Lord Lorne's came back to me:

*Unto the hills around do I lift up
My longing eyes.*

Any one who could not be happy here, must indeed be in an evil state.

I had a day to spare before we could foregather at Jasper House. What would I do with it? There was not enough time to go very far afield and the things that might be seen in a few hours' ride or drive, were already familiar and did not particularly attract me at that

moment. Then came the tempter, in the person of an eminent college professor

"Why not play golf?" said he

"I do not come into the Rocky Mountains to play golf," I replied severely.

"Have you ever played the Jasper course?" asked the professor, ignoring my superior air

"No," I replied, "and I have no intention of doing so. It is nothing less than a crime to bring golf into the Rockies. Is it not enough to have automobiles, an orchestra, an asphalt driveway, tame bears, the radio and the latest stock quotations, without adding golf?"

"And hot baths and comfortable beds and excellent meals?" added the professor, slyly.

"Well," I said, a trifle lamely, "they are different."

"Oh, are they?"

"Yes," I repeated, "they are quite different. But golf—why, the world is being corrupted with golf. You cannot go anywhere without stumbling over a golf course. One goes down to the seaside to bathe—and plays golf, one drives up into the Gatineau hills to fish—and finds a nine-hole course carved out of the bush; one takes the night train to Toronto to fill an important business engagement—and spends most of the day on the Lambton links. The Scotch have much to answer



Golf Course, 14th Green, Pyramid Mountains, Jasper National Park

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for—haggis and the bagpipes, Harry Lauder and sentimental fiction and curling—"

"Scotch whisky and oatmeal porridge," added the professor, with a rising inflection.

"Oh, well!" I admitted. "They did not do so badly when they invented Scotch whisky. But golf! Why I do believe that was nothing but a far-sighted conspiracy to tempt the other nationalities out of their offices, so that the Scotch might pick up all the fat jobs."

"Perhaps you are right," said the professor. "But if you have finished your pipe, come over with me and have a look at the new Jasper course."

"All right," I replied, "but I stuck to my guns."

"Well," asked the professor, as we stood on the first tee, "what do you think of it?"

I knew the spot very well, having wandered about the place a couple of years before. At that time it had been mostly rock and fallen timber. To-day—well, one might as well admit that it is one of the finest golf links in America, extraordinarily well laid out, with perfect greens, smooth fairways and tricky holes, and a glorious setting of mountain scenery.

"I think," I said, slowly—"I think that I must retract. I'll abandon my guns."

"How about a game?" asked the professor.

"Sorry!" I replied, sadly. "I left my clubs at home."

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"That's all right," said he. "I can borrow clubs for you, and I know of two other chaps to make up a foursome."

We hurried back to the Lodge, prodded the victims out of their armchairs, and a few minutes later were driving joyfully off from the first tee.

After we had holed out on the ninth green, and found that we were all even up to that point, we decided that the time had come for a smoke and a chat, and a chance to admire the view from the bench on the tenth tee. We, therefore, sat down in a row and lighted pipes or cigarettes, as the case may be.

"This Park," said the engineer, "has travelled a long way since I was here in 1913. Everything then was pretty primitive. Of course, there was no Lodge in those days and the accommodation over at the Town Site was confined to two or three so-called hotels, typical frontier shacks, with bedrooms in which you could scarcely turn around. You could overhear everything that your neighbours said in the next room, and see them, too, if you had any curiosity, as there were plenty of cracks and knot-holes in the walls. The food was all right, if you had a mountain appetite and did not mind such little oddities as flies in the butter and stale eggs. There was a trail of sorts up over Shovel Pass to Maligne Lake and it was possible to get up to Berg Lake at the

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foot of Robson. They were talking then of building a hotel somewhere below Pocahontas and piping the water from Miette hot springs. Fortunately, the war intervened. What they had planned was a typical modern hotel. Better counsel afterwards prevailed, and we have here in the Lodge something that fits ideally into the mountain landscape, and it stands on an incomparably finer and more central site."

"Yes," said the professor, "I think I have visited all the great national parks on this continent and I have seen nothing that appeals to me more than the Lodge with its flock of log shacks. Not even the most severe critic could find anything to cavil at in their appearance amid such surroundings, and inside they are as comfortable as they are picturesque outside. The only weak point, it seems to me, is that as more and more people come into Jasper it will be found impracticable to accommodate them in shacks. Some of them are already quite a distance from the Lodge, and particularly in rainy weather, the scheme would become unmanageable, if you doubled the present number. Also the cost of administration must be relatively very high; as it is it needs a much larger staff to take care of a hundred bedrooms, scattered all over the landscape. If the same number of bedrooms were under one roof, it would require a smaller staff to care for them."

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"Just the same," said the doctor, "I, for one, hope that they will find some way of carrying on along the present lines. It makes an ideal arrangement from every point of view. It is in good taste, it is restful, healthful, and gives one that feeling of privacy that one so seldom associates with an hotel."

"One solution of the problem," I suggested, "would be to restrict the number of people who are allowed to come into the Park. They might, for instance, limit the privilege to doctors, professors, engineers, and a few nondescripts like myself who only use this as a jumping-off place for the mountain trail and the peaks; or people might draw lots for the privilege; or the authorities might allow only those whose names began with a certain letter of the alphabet to come here in a given year "

"Bosh!" said the engineer, who was very practical-minded.

"Seriously, though," said the professor, who evidently felt that the conversation was in danger of getting too frivolous, and whose nimble mind had glanced off in another direction, "this whole question of our National Parks is one of very great importance. I do not want to seem to criticize the Parks administration. On the contrary, I have the greatest admiration for the way in which the Parks have been developed, from very small

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beginnings, into something of which Canada may well feel proud. But, inevitably, when something new of this kind is being built up and the authorities have to feel their way, always a little bit, but not too far in advance of public opinion, they have to do the best they can with the materials at hand. It is easier, and perhaps sometimes it is wiser, to build on the existing foundation than to attempt to pull things down and build anew. It seems to me, however, that the time is coming when some features of the Parks policy might be revised to advantage. We have now a group of magnificent National Parks in the Rockies and we have also a number of Forest Reserves, with almost equally fine potentialities as great national playgrounds. Also, the federal authorities have built up a force of very competent Wardens both in the Parks and in the Reserves. Would it not be in the public interest to link up in some way both the areas and their human guardians, and at the same time reconstruct the combined force so that it might offer a worth-while career to young men of energy, character, and ambition?"

"Something certainly should be done," said the doctor, "to make the job of Park Warden more attractive to the right kind of men. It's surprising to me that the service has been able to attract so many first class Wardens because, as things are to-day, the salaries are

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poor, and what means a good deal more, there is very little chance of promotion. The men who have gone in, have done so because they liked the work, but the best of them will not stay. The service will lose them when their knowledge and experience have made them most valuable. The only way to keep these men is to offer them the incentive of promotion. The Parks and Forestry Branches should be combined in one service and it should be possible for a young man with the right qualifications to enter that service at the bottom and earn his promotion step by step until he became Superintendent of one of the larger Parks, or even Commissioner of the entire service. Obviously, a man would have to show a decided administrative ability before he could hope to rise to a Superintendency, but if he had that ability, plus the detailed knowledge and experience gained in his Warden's job, he would make a much more competent Superintendent than any man sent out from Ottawa. I don't think most of us quite realize how much the ultimate success of the National Parks policy depends on the calibre of the Wardens."

"Of course," said the engineer, "there are some jobs in the Parks and Forestry services that demand technical qualifications, but apart from that I quite agree with you. It would certainly make for efficiency and economy of administration if the two branches were combined.

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However, this has nothing much to do with golf. Suppose we go on with the game?"

We got away from the tenth tee, rather to the annoyance of a pair that were coming up to the ninth green and had counted on going through us. However, the doctor got lost in the rough, so they had their way. The professor and I were down four when we holed out on the eighteenth green, and the historic nineteenth was played in the professor's room at the Lodge. The unanimous opinion was that the Jasper Golf Links left nothing whatever to be desired. "All the same," concluded the engineer, who hailed from Calgary, "I hope that some day we will be able to arrange a return match on the Banff Links."

The Warden and Bill had taken the outfit down during the day from Jasper to the mouth of the Snake Indian. I followed in the evening by train. My intention was to get off at a small flag station, called Verona, not far from the site of Jasper House. However, I made a mistake. In the smoking-room I had found a congenial companion, an officer of the Department of Mines at Ottawa, who was carrying out some investigations near the eastern boundary of the Park. We got into an interesting discussion and, the fact that I had to get off the train at Verona, though not entirely overlooked, certainly faded into the background, despite the fact

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that I had taken the precaution of telling the conductor of my intention.

We dropped down the valley, stopping now and then at some way station. After a while, a brakeman came through the train. My watch had stopped, but it seemed about the time that the train was due at Verona I interrupted my companion to ask the brakeman if the next station were Verona. He nodded and we resumed our conversation. In a few minutes the train slowed down. I picked up my traps, hastily shook hands with the engineer, and dropped off on to the platform.

As the train started away, I turned to find some one that could direct me to our camp. I discovered a man at my elbow. The fact that neither the Warden nor Bill was there to meet me had given me a little uneasiness.

"This is Verona?" I said.

The man held up his lantern to have a good look at me.

"Verona?" said he. "Hell, no! This is Snaring."

"The deuce you say! And how far is it from here to Verona?"

"Oh, about ten miles!"

And I had a dunnage bag, a small valise and a heavy camera to carry! Well, there was nothing else to do but to get forward. I shouldered my stuff and started

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down the line, looking longingly at the tail lights of the train as it crossed a river which should have been the Snake Indian but happened to be the Snaring.

I was approaching the bridge, stumbling over the ties which, as usual, were very badly spaced for pedestrians, when I happened to look up, and noticed to my surprise, that the train was still in sight. In fact, the tail lights appeared to me to be even brighter than they had been a minute before. I stopped, and watched that train intently. The difficulty I had in going a hundred yards had brought home to me the fact that it would probably take me until daylight to get to Verona. Was the train still moving away, or was it going backwards? For a moment, I thought it was coming nearer. Then my heart dropped into my boots when the tail lights appeared to be growing fainter. For, perhaps, a half a minute, I watched it intently, and then became convinced that all was well. The train slowly crossed the bridge, with a brakeman swinging out on the back platform. As he caught sight of me beside the track, he signalled the engine, the train bumped to a stop and, with an immense sigh of relief, I climbed again on board.

I found that, for the other passengers, my escapade had relieved the tedium of a rather hot and tiresome journey, and I had to run the gauntlet of a barrage of grins as I made my way back to the smoking-compartment.

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ment. Here, my friend the engineer told me what had happened. No sooner than I had dropped off the train, he had realized that I had made a mistake. He had started to pull off his long boots and, in his anxiety to stop the train, went clumping through the car with one boot off and the other boot on, like the boy in the fairy-tale. Fortunately, the conductor had not been far off. My friend had hastily explained what had happened, and the conductor had good-naturedly come back to rescue me.

A few minutes later, we did reach Verona and, after making sure that there was no mistake this time, I dropped off with my baggage and told the story to the amused Warden. Bill, also, had to be told when we came to the camp; to cap the climax, Robert the Devil, thrust his long, wordly-wise face through the flap of the tent, gazing at me so contemptuously that I threw a boot at him.

CHAPTER III

THE SNAKE INDIAN TRAIL



BEFORE we start out, up the Snake Indian River, on a three-weeks' journey, it may be worth while to say a few words about the magnificent National Park that forms the background of the picture. Since its boundaries were extended in 1927, so as to take in the alpine region down to the vast Columbia ice-field, Jasper Park is by all odds the largest of the Rocky Mountain parks. To say that its area is now 5,380 square miles does not mean very much to most of us, who find it difficult to visualize area without some contrasting medium. Perhaps a clearer impression of its extent will be gained if we bear in mind that Jasper Park is nearly two and a half times the size of the province of Prince Edward Island and not much short of the combined areas of the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island. When, as appears probable, the Mount Robson district is added to the park, it will be about equal in area to Yorkshire, by far the largest of the English counties.

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It would be invidious, and probably misleading, to institute a comparison between Jasper Park and its nearest rival in size, Rocky Mountain Park. When one stands on the shore of Lake Louise, or looks down from the Saddleback into Paradise Valley, it does not seem that anything could equal them in loveliness,—until one has wandered along the shores of Maligne Lake and thrilled to the splendour of the Tonquin Valley. Any argument, with oneself or others, as to the respective merits of these exquisite lakes and valleys, can end only in the conclusion that they are not comparable: there is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars. There is one glory of Louise and another glory of Maligne, there is a glory of Paradise Valley, and an entirely different glory of the Tonquin. What may perhaps be said with some degree of truth is that more of the grandeur of Rocky Mountain Park is seen from the railway, and more of the grandeur of Jasper Park revealed when one has wandered out a bit on the trail.

As the main line of the Canadian National Railways runs through Jasper Park, it is easily accessible from either east or west. It is not yet practicable to reach it by automobile, but within a few years good motor roads will be available from Edmonton into the Park, and probably from the west side of the Park to connect

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with the highways of British Columbia. Also, it is proposed to build a road north and south through the heart of the Rockies from Jasper to Banff. The Park itself is now well equipped with both automobile roads and pony trails, so that it is practicable to reach by motor all the points of interest in the central part of the Park, and most of the outlying districts on horse-back. In fact, if time is not too pressing, one can reach without any particular difficulty even the most remote corners of Jasper Park, to which trails have not yet been built. It is, of course, a rather slow method of travel, when one has to cut one's own trails, but on the other hand "jungling" has a thrill of its own for the adventurous. There is a peculiar joy in feeling that one is completely off the track, out on one's own, pathfinding if even only in one corner of a national park.

The Snake Indian Trail, along which we started out, follows the east bank of that very picturesque river from the Athabaska north to the boundary of Jasper Park or thereabout. The name, according to Sir James Hector, comes from a small tribe or band of Indians who once inhabited the valley of the Snake Indian, but were treacherously wiped out by the Stonies. They were invited to a peace feast and came unarmed. The Stonies had secreted their weapons and, at a given signal, fell upon their guests and exterminated every

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one of them. Down the valley of the Snake Indian, native hunters came in the olden days, bringing furs and meat to Jasper House, which had been originally built by the North West Company and was afterward maintained by the Hudson's Bay Company. To-day, nothing remains of this outpost of the fur trade but the ruins of a chunney in the midst of a meadow, one or two grassy mounds, and a pathetic little graveyard, but the big-game hunters of to-day follow the same trail to the haunts of the grizzly and the caribou, the mountain goat and the mountain sheep, beyond the northern boundary of the Park. With no evil designs upon these inhabitants of the mountain, we followed in the footsteps of the big-game hunters.

Free from the burning ambition to bring back a record head, we could enjoy many things that the big-game hunters are perhaps too preoccupied to notice: the glittering majesty of a great peak, emerging from behind the sombre shadow of some intervening range; the white rage of a mountain torrent fighting its way to freedom down the imprisoning channel of a majestic gorge; the effortless flight of a goat or a sheep up the impossible face of a mountain; the smell of pine and moss and wildflowers in the early morning; the indescribable charm of an alpine meadow, the delicate beauty and fragrance of twinflowers in some moss-carpeted glen; glimpses of

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emerald lake or misty waterfall or hanging glacier through a curtain of spruce; the lumbering and half-contemptuous retreat of a bear into the heart of the forest, the soft tracery of sunbeams across the trail, a bull caribou, with head thrown up, silhouetted against the background of a sparkling sand-bar; a mother duck with her family sailing serenely down a wild rapid; a saucy whisky-jack, jeering at the traveller from the top of a neighbouring tree, the flame of Indian Paint Brush on a hillside.

We were brought down to vulgar realities with a bump. Robert had aroused the indignation of the pack-horse in front of him by slyly slipping ahead at a turn in the trail, and was lashing out viciously to prevent the other from regaining his place in the line. Robert, you see, was an old-timer—the last survivor of the railway construction gang. He had carried a pack on mountain trails for many years and, because of his experience and native cunning, had been accustomed to leading the string. To-day, as a punishment for misbehaviour, he had been sent back to the rear, treatment which he bitterly resented. He was determined to make his way forward to his just place at the head of the procession, and this was merely a first step.

He was ambling along now, demure, meek, the very picture of innocence. Not much more than half the size of the other horses, Robert sometimes gave people

the ludicrously wrong idea that he was down-trodden, ill-used, bullied by his companions, in short, something to be pitied and petted and protected. All of which appealed to his sarcastic humour, for the fact was that for years he had been known and dreaded by the horses of Jasper Park. It is said that in his earlier days strange horses were sometimes ill-advised enough to take liberties with him, but the offense was never repeated. Robert had a way of his own that was calculated to transform the supercilious stranger in a moment into a panic-stricken poltroon. Manœuvring until he had the enemy broadside on, he would then rush between his legs and lash out vigorously as he went through. Thereafter, Robert had been left severely alone. Those who knew him thought it wiser to concede whatever point might be at issue rather than fight it out with this *enfant terrible*.

And so it was to-day. The philosophic Rod had accepted the last place. Buck, Blaze and Echo were ahead, but immediately in front of Robert now was one of the riding horses, Rastus, with his master, and not only did that master know Robert's little ways, but Robert knew that he knew them. No further progress could be made for the present. Indeed, Robert must go warily or he might lose the ground already gained. The rider glanced around and tried to look stern, but

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the sight of the tough little rebel meekly chewing a wayside flower and trying to suppress the sardonic gleam in his eyes, was too much for his gravity. He had to turn quickly about and pretend that he had seen nothing—and Robert scored one.

That, however, was not enough. He still had his eye on the head of the outfit, but was too wary to attempt anything while we were on the narrow trail. At last the opportunity came. The trail ran out of the woods into a meadow, and Robert swung out in a wide circle and turned into the trail again well ahead of the leading horse. Discipline, of course, must be maintained, and we had to drive him to the rear, where he fell back a hundred yards or so and whinnied profanely. Yet I think he felt that on the whole he had scored, giving way in the end only to the weight of overpowering numbers.

We camped the first night at what are known as the Shale Banks, a favourite resort of mountain sheep and mountain goats. I had brought with me a large and intricate camera and this first day's journey convinced me that it was not at all the kind of machine for such a trip. It was too large and clumsy to take on the saddle and had to be roped on top of one of the packs. Almost invariably when I needed it in a hurry for some particularly effective picture of wild life, the pack animal

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that carried it was far in the rear while I was up front, or vice versa. Also, as it was designed to be used with a tripod and could not be manipulated very well without one, the goat or sheep, or whatever creature it might have been, refused to stand still while I hunted savagely for some spot that would accommodate the tripod.

This day, at the Shale Banks, I struggled through a quarter of a mile of heavy under-brush to get a picture of a particularly fine ram that was posing on the summit of a crag on the opposite bank of the river. First I dropped the tripod, then a branch swept the camera out of my hand, then a mischievous twig picked the spectacles neatly off my nose and dropped them into a bog hole, and I had to find a dry spot for camera and tripod while I groped in the mud for my glasses. Naturally, by the time they had been recovered and cleaned, the ram had remembered an engagement elsewhere and had disappeared over the top of the bank. As the days went by that unfortunate camera gradually disintegrated. Some of the country through which we had to travel was rough and trailless, and this particular machine, at any rate, was not built to resist continual jolting and the attacks of overhanging branches. First a screw got loose and dropped out; then one of the legs of the tripod jammed, and after that, scarcely a day passed without the falling out or the going on strike of



Lower Falls, Snake Indian River

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one or another of the innumerable small gadgets that make up the machinery of a camera. Take the advice of one who has learned by painful experience. when you go out on Rocky Mountain trails, take with you a small camera that can be stuffed into the side pocket of your jacket, or be carried slung across your back.

We stopped for lunch at Snake Indian Falls, and I barely escaped falling down a cliff in my effort to get a picture from a particularly good angle. The river here comes down through a spectacular canyon, deep and tortuous. Above the canyon it is still a fair-sized stream but is beginning to narrow. We spent the night at the Park cabin on Willow Creek, one of the tributaries of the Snake Indian. The distance travelled is about twenty-eight miles from Jasper House and fifty-two from Jasper. The afternoon trail was particularly attractive, winding through bits of timber and occasional meadows, in one of which we surprised a dozen mountain sheep who made off in leisurely fashion through the timber. Once more I was reminded, as we rode along, that the largest and most luscious fruit invariably lies just beyond one's reach. This time, it happened to be strawberries, which grew plentifully along the trail, they seemed immense from the saddle, but always proved rather disappointing when I dismounted to pick them.

Curious are the vagaries of memory! Many incidents

that were probably worth remembering, in connection with this journey through northern Jasper, have completely escaped me, while there remain odds and ends of impressions. I can see vividly enough, for instance, the Warden and Bill throwing a diamond hitch over Blaze's pack. They were trying a new variety, recommended by Bill but received without enthusiasm by the somewhat conservative-minded Warden.

"I suppose," said I, "there are any number of ways of tying a pack?"

"Well," replied the Warden, "there are many ways, but they are all variants of two methods."

I was curious to get an authentic description of these two methods, but both the Warden and Bill were now engaged in the strenuous operation of throwing Bill's new variety of the diamond hitch, and I could get nothing out of them. The picture however remains. the Warden, with one foot braced against Blaze's hind-quarters, is pulling on the rope with might and main, while Bill snaps up the slack on the other side. "All right!" cries Bill, and the Warden puts all his weight on the rope while Blaze groans disconsolately—rather from force of habit than because he has any hope of fooling these veteran trail-riders. "Again!" yells Bill, and the Warden gives another mighty heave. "And again!" Bill urges, while the Warden's muscles stand out and

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his face goes from red to purple. "Another inch!" and the Warden violently produces it. "Coming up!" as Bill throws over the cinch. Finally, they stand back and survey their handiwork and agree that it will stand even the strain of an afternoon's jungling through close timber.

The third day, about noon, we reached Muskeg Creek and spent the night in Blue Creek Cabin, sixteen miles from the Willow Creek camp. The following morning we turned up at Blue Creek, had lunch at Box Canyon, and stopped a little before sundown at Caribou Camp, forks of Blue Creek, fifteen miles.

We had thought of going over to Rock Lake, which lies a few miles to the northeast, but decided that it was not worth while. Rock Lake is chiefly memorable because of the Indian legend associated with it, an incident that nearly brought about war between the Stonies and the Dogribs. There are several variants of the story. This one is perhaps the most picturesque and the least probable.

There was a beautiful maiden among the Dogrib Indians. That, of course, to anyone acquainted with the Dogribs, is the most ludicrous of improbabilities; but she was beautiful from a Dogrib point of view, which, indeed, makes all the difference.

This maiden, Star-born by name, was betrothed to a young warrior of the tribe, and she herself was a daughter of the principal chief

One day, a stranger appeared in the Dogrib village. He was a medicine man, of that mountain branch of the Assiniboines known as the Stonies, and his home was on the Snake Indian River, in what is now Jasper Park. He had been cast out by his tribe because of some mis-doing, unforgivable even in a medicine man, and had wandered far to the north until, exhausted and half starved, he had shambled into the Dogrib village. The Dogribs were unusually kind to him, considering that he was a helpless, unprotected stranger. They took him in, fed him, and adopted him as one of the tribe. The Stony returned their kindness by bewitching Star-born with his charms and made away with her in the form of a dog. The Dogribs overtook him on the second day, but as the maiden did not appear to be with him, and as he told a very plausible story of homesickness to account for his flight, they permitted him to continue his journey. They were puzzled over the dog, which made desperate efforts to run after them as they were leaving the camp of the medicine man, but it did not occur to them that this might be the missing girl.

The medicine man and his dog continued their journey and came, in time, to the village of the Stonies, on Rock

Lake. Before he arrived there, he had made up his mind what he would do. He saw a way of turning his wickedness to his own advantage. He would wipe out his former iniquity by posing before the tribe as a hero. He restored Star born to her human form, but left her without speech, and entered the village leading her by the hand.

He told a plausible story of having rescued her from a wicked magician and having effected her escape by turning her into a dog, adding that the magician had stolen her speech from her by such powerful magic that it would not be possible to restore it for some time. In that way he gained credit and made sure that the girl could not betray him.

All went well for a time. Indeed the medicine man had won the admiration of his fellow-tribesmen because of his cleverness and humanity in rescuing the maiden from her perilous situation, the fact that the maiden seemed always sad and downcast was attributed to the loss of her speech. They were inclined to blame her, however, because she showed very clearly her dislike for the medicine man and shrank from him in fear.

Then, one day, a young warrior appeared in the village. He was a stranger and was received rather coldly, though no harm was done to him. He asked to be taken before the chief of the tribe. Fortunately,

the medicine man was away at the time. To the chief, the stranger made a curious request.

"I am a Dogrib," he said, pointing to the north, the place where his people lived. "Your medicine man has done bitter injury to my tribe. If I were to tell you what evil he has wrought, you probably would not believe me, or perhaps you would defend him because he is one of your people. I challenge you, though, to bring him and the maiden who is with him, and myself, before your tribe and judge for yourselves which of us has the greater magic. If I fail to convince you that he is an evil scoundrel, my life shall be the forfeit."

The chief agreed to the test and, the next day, summoned a meeting of the tribe. The medicine man was sent for. At first, he was inclined to refuse to have anything to do with the stranger, but finally decided to come, feeling sure that he would be more than a match for the young man in magic. He already suspected who the stranger was. When he and the girl arrived before the lodge of the chief, the girl ran joyfully to the stranger and threw herself at his feet. Turning to the chief, the warrior said:

"Here is the contest I offer: let your medicine man and myself prove which of us has the greater power to restore speech to this maiden."

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"That," said the chief, "is a fair test, but how will it prove your charge that the medicine man is guilty of evil-doing?"

"Wait and see!" replied the warrior. "If I do not prove him guilty, I am ready to die."

The medicine man at once realized that he had been cleverly trapped. If he gave the girl the use of her tongue, she would at once deny his story and tell the tribe how shamefully he had ill-used her. If he refused to do so, and the stranger should succeed where he had failed, he would not merely lose his credit as a medicine man, but the girl would still have power to condemn him. He tried to escape from the test by haranguing the tribe and urging them to kill the stranger, but they were already beginning to suspect him and told him to go on with the contest. He then said that he must wait for the new moon, but they yelled to him to do it now. By this time, he was too panic-stricken to think clearly, and, filled with shame at the thought that this young stranger might prove himself the greater magician, he touched the maiden's lips and restored her speech. She at once told the story of his evil conduct, and the chief ordered him to be killed. The warrior then told the chief that the girl was to have been his bride. They were loaded with presents, and then started out on the

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long trail to their own village. The medicine man was bound with thongs, weighted with a heavy stone, and thrown into the middle of Rock Lake.

CHAPTER IV

ABOUT GALLINIPPERS



FROM Caribou Camp, the Warden, Bill and I, without the horses, climbed a steep hillside to see a curiosity of the neighbourhood, the Natural Arch. There was nothing very extraordinary about this immense stone arch, bridging the entrance to a little valley in the side of the mountain, but conscientiously I lugged my white elephant of a camera up the hill to get a picture. A storm was brewing as we climbed and the air became very heavy and sultry. Also, there accompanied us from below a host of peculiarly vicious and hungry mosquitoes. By the time I had reached a point opposite the Arch, and had set up the tripod, there must have been at least fifteen thousand mosquitoes in my immediate neighbourhood and the attacking force was being recruited with regiments of enthusiastic volunteers from every direction. I maintained the very unequal contest for a minute or two, attempting to manipulate the camera with one hand while I fought the enemy

with the other, but I was outnumbered, outmanœuvred, outflanked and outclassed and there was no other alternative than to beat an ignominious retreat. Tying a handkerchief around as much of my face as it would cover, and grabbing the camera in one hand and the tripod in the other, I fled down the mountain-side. The other two had already evacuated the position.

One might compile quite a large book, a sort of prose anthology of mosquito-lore, or perhaps a commination service, from the impassioned comments of travellers in North America on the habits, customs and personality of this most enterprising insect. So far as one can judge, its range exceeds that of any other inhabitant of this continent, two-footed, four-footed, or multi-footed, and its characteristics appear to be the same in the swamps of Louisiana or the Arctic valleys of King Wilham Land. Either it never sleeps, or else, on some communal system, it divides the twenty-four hours into watches. One can imagine the mosquito guard going the rounds, down in the long grass, routing out Bill, Jack and Henry for the Middle Watch, and one seems to hear their shrill profanity as they sharpen the points of their proboscides and hasten to vent their spleen upon you and me. No, that's all wrong! See the dictionary: "a dipterous insect having (*in the female*) a long proboscis capable of puncturing the skin

of man and other animals and extracting blood." So the mosquito guard would rout out Marie, Anne and Laura for duty, while Bill, Jack and Henry would turn over with a grunt of satisfaction and mutter: "Thank Heaven, this is a job for the Suffragettes!"

American literature—taking that much-abused word in its proper continental sense—is packed with references to our musical friend, the mosquito and you may have noticed that, whatever other qualities they may lack, such as charity and sweet reasonableness, these comments are never perfunctory. The mosquito may not be popular, but there is a certain quality about her that commands respect. The man that writes about her, writes with feeling. He does not say: "I met a mosquito on Moose Creek," as he might if he were mentioning a mere grizzly. No, he generally goes into particulars, and one senses in his careful choice of words the restraint of a writer hampered by the modern prejudice against profanity. And then, of course, he must remember that he is speaking of a lady, however unlady-like her behaviour may be.

That ingenious traveller, Cuming, in his *Tour to the West*, is reminded by "these venomous and troublesome insects" of a story he had heard: "Some gentlemen in South Carolina had dined together, and while the wine circulated freely the conversation turned on the quan-

tity of mosquitoes generated in the rice swamps of that country. One of the gentlemen said that those insects never bothered him and that he believed that people in general complained more of them than they had occasion to do—for his part, he would not notice them, even if he were naked in a rice swamp. Another of the company, according to the custom of the country where all arguments terminate in a wager, offered him a considerable bet that he would not lie quietly on his face, naked, in the swamp even for a quarter of an hour. The other took him up, and all the party immediately adjourned to the place fixed upon. The gentleman stripped, lay down, and bore with the most resolute fortitude the attack of the hostile foe. The time had almost expired when his antagonist, fearing that he would lose his wager, seized a fire-brand from one of the negro fires that happened to be near, and, approaching slyly, applied it to a fleshy part of his prostrate adversary, who, not able to bear the increased pain, clapped his hand on the spot and jumped up crying out 'A gallinipper, by God!' He then acknowledged that he had lost his wager and the party returned to the house to renew their libations to Bacchus."

And hear what Father De Smet has to say of mosquitoes? "I have suffered so much from them that I cannot leave them unnoticed. We were obliged to

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wage continual war upon them and their allies, the gnats. The latter teased us by day, the former, more cowardly, attacked us by night. These famished enemies, the product of the stagnant waters and decaying plants, at the approach of a convoy rush from their infected abodes, and accompany it with their plaintive buzzing to the spot where the traveller seeks, in vain, a brief repose after the heat and hardships of the day. The winged tribe at once sound the trump of war, and darting on their tired victims, sting, harass and pursue him until they have assuaged their sanguinary fury, and obliged the unfortunate traveller, already sweltering with heat, to seek a stifling shelter under a buffalo robe or a thick blanket."

On another occasion the famous missionary returns to the subject:

"Hitherto, the mosquitoes had greatly tormented us, but now they entirely vanished. We sought the cause of this phenomenon. The Indians told us that the absence of our winged enemies was owing to the prodigious number of buffalo which were grazing on the neighbouring plains, and which attracted these insects. In fact, we saw these noble animals throwing the earth on their bodies by means of their horns and feet, or rolling themselves in the sand and dust, and thus filling the air with clouds, in the endeavour to rid themselves

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of their vexatious followers. The lot of these animals appeared bad enough, for they were pursued day and night. During a bad week we heard their bellowing like the noise of distant thunder, or like the murmurs of the ocean waves beating against the shore."

Farnham, another early western traveller, also pays his compliments.

"A swarm of the most gigantic and persevering musquitoes that ever gathered tribute from human-kind lighted upon us and demanded blood. Not in the least scrupulous as to the manner in which they urged their claims, they fixed themselves boldly and without ceremony upon our organs of sight, smell and whipping in such numbers that, in consequence of the employment they gave us in keeping them at a distance, and the pain which they inflicted upon our restive animals, we lost the trail."

Even the philosophic calm of that renowned explorer, David Thompson, breaks down when he comes to speak of "myriads of tormenting Musketoes " "The air," he complains, "is thick with them; there is no cessation day nor night of suffering from them. Smoke is no relief, they can stand more smoke than we can, and smoke cannot be carried about with us. The narrow windows were so crowded with them, they trod each

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other to death in such numbers, we had to sweep them out twice a day."

Then he proceeds to describe, with that meticulous care that he gives to all subjects, great or small, the ingenious weapon of the species.

"The Musketoe Bill, when viewed through a good microscope, is of a curious formation, composed of two distinct pieces; the upper is three-sided, of a black colour, and sharp-pointed, under which is a round white tube, like clear glass, the mouth inverted inwards. With the upper part the skin is perforated, it is then drawn back, and the clear tube applied to the wound, and the blood sucked through it into the body, until it is full. Thus their bites are two distinct operations, but so quickly done as to feel as only one."

There is really something almost inhuman in this cold-blooded analysis of an operation, the very thought of which makes one suffer in anticipation. He goes on to say,

"Persons feel them in a different manner; some are swelled, even bloated, with intolerable itching, others feel only the smart of the minute wounds. Oil is the only remedy and that frequently applied. The Natives rub themselves with sturgeon oil, which is found to be far more effective than any other oil."

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The oil was probably rancid, which would make it all the more pleasing to Indian nostrils. Perhaps the lady-mosquito finds it offensive, or perhaps it merely tangles her delicate feet.

But Thompson's insatiable curiosity is not yet satisfied.

"A question has often been asked," he says, "to which no satisfactory answer has ever been given; where, and how, do they pass the winter, for on their first appearance they are all full grown, and the young brood does not come forward until July. The opinion of the Natives, as well as many of ourselves, is that they pass the winter at the bottom of ponds of water, for when these ponds are free of ice, they appear covered with gnats in a weak state, and two or three days after the Muskrtoes are on us in full force. While this theory may do well enough for the low countries, where, except the bare rock, the whole surface may be said to be wet, and more or less covered with water, it will not do for the high and dry plains where, when the warm season comes on, they start up in myriads, a veritable full-grown plague. We must conclude that wherever they find themselves, when the frost sets in, there they shelter themselves from the winter, be the country wet or dry."

And David Thompson is not yet done with the mosquito

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"While these insects are so numerous they are a terror to every creature on dry lands, if swamps may be so called, the dogs howl, roll themselves on the ground, or hide themselves in the water, the Fox seems always in a fighting humour; he barks, snaps on all sides, and, however hungry and ready to go a birdsnesting, of which he is fond, is fairly driven to seek shelter in his hole. A sailor finding swearing of no use, tried what tar would do, and covered his face with it, but the Musketoos stuck to it in such numbers as to blind him, and the tickling of their wings was worse than their bites "

Thompson is even inspired to perpetrate a joke

"Hudson Bay," he says, "is certainly a country that Sinbad the Sailor never saw, as he makes no mention of Musketoos."

A much more recent traveller, Howard Palmer, in his *Mountaineering in the Selkirk*s, adds this measure to the sum of knowledge of the omnipresent mosquito.

"The mosquitoes of the Columbia deserve more than passing notice, for they must be taken into account by every traveller whose way lies thither. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate their viciousness and unrelenting ferocity during the hot summer months."

And then he goes on to divide them up into species:

"Of mosquitoes there are several kinds—small ones that sing and bite as soon as they alight, others that

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bite unceremoniously without notice; still others, larger and slower, that hum and make considerable fuss before commencing the attack. Besides these, there are no-see-ums, black flies, bottle flies, and bull-dogs, named in the order of increasing size but inversely with respect to their nuisance. All these may and do bite savagely, but the mosquitoes are by far the worst tormentors. They swarm in millions and vitiate everything with their presence. They boil in the soup, they bake in the bread, they are crushed in one's note-book, they get into one's eyes, nose, mouth, ears, and hair. No hole is too small for them to find, and once found, legions will use it. Brown and gray particularly attract them and hordes alight on stockings and hats. They ride on one's back from the forest, and when open country is reached above timber-line they return to the assault at each halt."

Elsewhere, he says:

"Our tormentors were most diabolically vindictive as we made our preparations for the night and prospects for peaceful slumber appeared far from rosy. However, before we turned in, every hole in tent and curtain was carefully sewed up and the sod cloth was weighted with stones. Then a universal slaughter of the insects inside took place, and as a reward we passed one of the most comfortable nights on the trip. In the early

evening it was particularly satisfying to sit behind the curtain and watch a dozen or more dragon-flies darting about this way and that, snapping up the wretched little pests with the greatest of zest. However, it was somewhat discouraging to consider what an untold multitude of dragon-flies would be needed to diminish in any sensible degree the forces of our common enemy."

He seems, indeed, to wonder why Providence saw fit to permit so many mosquitoes and so very few dragon-flies. One can, of course, sympathize with his satisfaction in watching the hunting of mosquitoes by dragon-flies, but for my part an even more gratifying experience is to sit down in a well-screened tent, and watch mosquitoes gnashing their teeth outside the netting.

"Yes," says the Warden, in a reminiscent mood, "and don't you believe it when anyone says there are no mosquitoes in the north country. They're all through the Arctic, and they don't believe in the eight-hour day. They're at it all the time, day and night, winter and summer. Why, I've seen a tough old-timer crouching between two smudges, in winter, in Alaska, and cursing long and loud and fluent."

Even the bands or clans of the Blackfeet include one known as the Mosquitoes.

"This union," says Maximilian, "consists of young people, many of whom are only eight or ten years of

age, there are also some young men among them, and sometimes even a couple of old men in order to see to the observance of the laws and regulations. This union performs wild, youthful pranks; they run about the camp whenever they please; pinch, nip, and scratch men, women and children, in order to give annoyance like the mosquitoes."

But one has hardly touched the fringe of this much-discussed subject. What is really needed, in the preparation of a Mosquito Anthology, is an editor endowed with broad sympathy and understanding, one capable of appreciating equally the point of view of the man and that of the mosquito. The material as it presents itself in books is of course distinctly one-sided, representing the viewpoint of the man rather than that of his antagonist, but that could be taken care of by a little judicious editing. Indeed the compiler might even manage to convey the impression that writers occasionally recognize the good intentions of the mosquito and her essential kind-heartedness. One might illustrate this by an example: Mrs. Schaffer, in her *Old Indian Trails*, tells us that in one place in the mountains a qualm of loneliness came over her and her companions as they realized that they were shut off by an unfordable river from civilization, and she goes on to say:

"But there is always medicine for every woe, if only

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one knows where to look for it; this time it was a wave of mosquitoes which swept down upon us in the dusk. With all our forethought and caution we had forgotten the netting so necessary for that country. All thoughts of home and friends and other troubles were wiped out in the vain hope of inventing some way to rid ourselves of the small pests. Nothing seemed of any avail and eventually, like hanging, we got used to them, more or less."

Now, obviously, the underlying idea of Mrs. Schaffer's remarks is that the mosquito is an antidote to homesickness. The suppositious editor must of course keep that idea in his mind. The argument would then be quite clear. Mrs. Schaffer is troubled with homesickness. Certain mosquitoes appear on the scene, and the nostalgia is cured. Homesickness is an unpleasant sensation and, unquestionably one should feel gratitude toward anyone who drives it away. Ergo, Mrs. Schaffer, however misleading her language may seem, must have felt some gratitude to the mosquitoes; and it would do her a manifest injustice to suppose that she failed to recognize the inherent kindliness of those who came so opportunely to her rescue. Even if she were inclined to doubt it, the fact that they were of the same sex would surely be a deciding factor, as women always stand together. The editor is, therefore, not merely

justified in assuming, he is compelled to assume, that the passage as it appears in Mrs. Schaffer's book is incorrect, that she has in fact been made the victim, as most of us have, of an incompetent proofreader. In transferring the passage to his Anthology, one might therefore expect him to edit the language slightly, so that its spirit might be plain. Something, in fact, like this

"But there is always medicine for every woe, if only one knows where to look for it; this time it was a group of mosquitoes which swept gaily down upon us in the dusk. With all our forethought and caution we had forgotten the possibility of a visit from these gentle creatures, and were correspondingly elated. All thoughts of home and friends and other troubles were wiped out as we listened spell-bound to the magic of their tiny harps."

One feels that such an Anthology could not fail to be popular. It would be an inspiration to every traveller. Hunters would regard it as an indispensable companion. Fishermen would take it with them to the banks of far-off streams. Young men and maidens would dip shyly into its glowing pages. And when this *sode-mecum* has been placed in every home, one further step would still remain to be taken, before we could feel free to look the much-maligned mosquito in the face. Has it ever occurred to you that we on this continent have shown very little imagination or sense of proportion in

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our choice of national emblems. Canada adopted the beaver as her representative animal many years ago, the United States the eagle. No one really knows why. How many people in Canada have ever seen a beaver, unstuffed? And how many citizens of the United States are on speaking terms with the eagle? Why pin one's faith to a very much over-rated mammal or a haughty and exclusive bird? Why not unite,—Canadians and Americans,—in a gesture of inspiring internationalism and make the Mosquito—the aggressive, wide-awake, efficient, incisive, up-to-date Mosquito—the emblem of North America?

CHAPTER V

THE DELECTABLE VALLEY



BLUE CREEK winds down through a wide and very beautiful valley, an unusually wide valley to find in the heart of the Rockies. To us it was the Delectable Valley, as we rode contentedly through miles of meadow-land and fragrant shrub, waves of purple vetch rippling over the surface of the grass-lands, strawberries ripening everywhere under the August sun, points of crimson glowing invitingly along the trail. On one side rose the ramparts of Brewster's Wall, and on the other a range whose gorgeous colouring demanded that it should be called the Sunset Mountains. Time and again, we forded the creek, whose birthplace was almost in sight at the head of a lateral valley.

As we approached one of these fords, we surprised a wild duck sailing unconcernedly downstream on the surface of a boiling rapid. She scuttled into a little bay as the leading horse splashed into the stream. Then, as we pulled up our horses to watch her, she became the



The Snake Indian

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agitated centre of a comically pathetic little drama. Round a bend in the creek came three ducklings, tiny feather balls tossing about on the surface. As they came abreast of her haven she called them to her, but either they could not hear her or would not obey. Then one could see that she was torn between her fear of the gigantic enemy so perilously near and the welfare of her children. Mother-love prevailed. With one terrified look at us, she dashed out into the stream and overtook the ducklings. When we last saw them the gallant little family were landing on the far side of a sand-bank several hundred yards below.

Before we could reach our camping-place that night we had to pass through a brief but heavy thunderstorm. Whatever discomfort we suffered was more than counterbalanced by the magnificence of the picture. We had been riding under a cloudless sky. Two black clouds appeared from behind the ranges on either side, travelling rapidly and diagonally toward each other like two great armies, miraculously expanding and eating up the sky as they flew. The sun was blotted out, day turned to twilight, but vast though the cloud-armies had become, they covered only the central part of the heavens, leaving blue sky on either side, and the clouds themselves were sharply defined, their edges outlined in silver.

Across the ebony ceiling, from peak to peak of the

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opposing ranges, shot a single flash of lightning, and the ominous silence that seems to precede a thunderstorm was shattered by the first roar of a big gun. As if this were the signal for a general engagement, flash succeeded flash, and roar succeeded roar in bewildering and deafening succession, each peal being taken up and tossed back and forth between the ranges, until sky, earth and air seemed one stupendous and awe-inspiring battlefield. And, to carry out the illusion of war, we, the innocent bystanders, were presently bombarded with icy shrapnel from above. Then, as suddenly as it had opened, the battle came to an end. Each army seemed to have annihilated the other. Their sable ranks broke up and disappeared; silver clouds rolled up behind them; and the sun burst through.

We continued our journey and made camp. Some time after nightfall, when we were sitting around the camp fire enjoying one more smoke before turning in, the storm swept back again with brief but rending fury, and in one revealing flash we saw the horses, which had been feeding in the meadow below, storming up the side of the hillock on which we were camped, led by the irrepressible Robert. The ungrateful wretches were ready enough to wander miles down trail when it suited their occasions, but in the middle of a thunder-storm, after dark, they sought the comfort of human companionship.

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This country offers a strong contrast to the Whirlpool. There, we had to travel overtime to find any sort of feed for the horses. Here, good feed is abundant, and that is a pretty vital consideration to any one travelling with horses. And yet, even in the best feed country, you can never be sure that in the morning your ponies will be where you left them the night before. They may get nervous over some unexpected or mysterious noise, or it occurs to them that last night's feeding-ground was better than this, or they may be filled with a sudden desire to escape from the unknown to the known. In any event, off they go, in the middle of the night, and in the early morning you may have to foot it many a weary mile before you overtake the truants. Bill tells of a method he has found useful in preventing his horses from wandering. If he notices them drifting toward the down trail he hides in the bush and throws sticks at them. First, they are merely curious and suspicious. When he throws again, they will probably start back a few yards and snort in alarm. Finally, on the third attack from this hidden enemy, they incontinently turn tail and gallop back to their abandoned pasture.

The Rockies seem to have developed a brand of horses that have learned to adapt themselves to the peculiar conditions of the mountains. They climb like monkeys. I have ridden a little mountain pony that

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carried me with apparent ease up a bank as steep as the roof of a house. After they have been out on the trail for a year or two, they show an uncanny faculty for sizing up obstacles and getting over difficult country.

I suppose the time is coming when this ancient friend of man will be found only in museums, stuffed, with the Great Auk, and the Dodo. Many of us will regret its passing, finding in it certain fine qualities that are altogether lacking in an automobile.

It would be an interesting study to trace the history of the horse on this continent. We know, of course, that it was brought to America by the Spaniards. In the next hundred years many of the descendants of these Spanish horses reverted to the wild state and gradually spread north in ever increasing herds from Mexico, through California, and up over the plains of the Northwest. The Blackfeet seem to have got them from the Kootenay or other tribes west of the mountains, and some time later they spread east to the homes of the Crees, Assiniboines and Sioux.

We had good going through the Delectable Valley, but as we turned up the side valley that leads to Rock Slide Pass we got on to soft ground and had to pick our way slowly and carefully until we came to the firm slope leading up to the pass. Having passed the summit, we started down Rock Slide Creek, swinging from one side

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of it to the other, sometimes over rock slides, oftener through muskeg. As a matter of fact, we experienced pretty well every kind of trail in the course of this journey, from good park trails through open woods or dry meadows, down to the sketchiest kind of trails through that horrible combination, wet boulder and muskeg. We had our share also of down timber, windfalls, but not the kind of windfalls one wanted.

Our camp that night was on Rock Slide Creek, and one of us at any rate heaved a sigh of relief when everything had been tidied for the night. It was a very good camp, high and dry, in a glade among the pines. I had been struck with the comparative absence of bird life in this country. One morning, on the Snake Indian, I had awakened to the song of the chuckadee, and had seen a phoebe and a couple of humming birds, but beyond these there seemed to be nothing but whisky-jacks and buffalo birds. Here, in camp, we could hear the cheerful whistling of the whisky-jack. Both the whisky-jack and the buffalo bird are saucy little beggars and sometimes become rather a nuisance. This evening, a whisky-jack stole a sausage from the frying-pan right under my nose. He dropped it in the grass when I chased him, and disappeared in the woods, jeering at me as he went. When I turned back I was just in time to see his mate flying off with the sausage! The

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buffalo bird seems equally fearless of mankind. One of them ran up on my shoulder one day, as we were having lunch, and there was nearly always one of them with us on the trail, hopping from horse to horse, jumping to some nearby branch and then down on to the horse's back again, like an acrobat. He is a neat little chap with striped back, perky head and very bright, saucy eyes.

Bill was reminded of a wolf story, as we sat looking into the camp fire.

"I was travelling in winter on snowshoes," he said, "over on the Snake Indian, making my way back to Blue Creek where I had my camp. There was no cabin there then. I was still several miles from camp when I heard wolves howling. They seemed to be pretty near all round me, one up on a hillside to my left, a second in the woods on my right, and a third up the trail in front. It was very heavy going, the snow was wet, I had had a long day's tramp and was about all in. Darkness was coming on and I had still some way to go. When the howling of the wolves became clearer and it was evident that they were closing in on me, I got out my axe—it was the only weapon I happened to have with me—and struck at a dead trot, making as much noise as I could. The wolves drew sullenly away and I made a dash of a few hundred yards and leaned up against

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another dead tree to get back my breath. The wolves crept down again, and again I got to work, hammering at a hollow tree. I kept this up for some time. I was travelling along a forest trail and there was no moon. Finally, I came to a bit of meadow, lighter than the forest which, by this time, was nearly black. I knew that the meadow was close to Blue Creek, dashed across it, and over the creek, and crept into my tent. My gun was there and all was well "

As Bill didn't seem to have any more wolf stories, we turned in early. I was awakened in the middle of the night by the feel of something crawling heavily over my feet. By the light of the dying fire, I could see the dim shape of a porcupine and kicked him off. He waddled out of the tent door, shaking his wicked tail. The others were awakened by the noise, and told disquieting yarns of "porkies" crawling over a man's head in the night, of his waking suddenly and striking out, with horrible consequences to his face and hands.

"For myself," said Bill, "I'd rather have a grizzly in the tent than a 'porky'."

As we were dropping off to sleep once more, we heard Porky roaming around outside the tent, biting at the ropes. As a porcupine's teeth are sharp enough to bring a tent down in this fashion, one of us had to rush out and drive him away. Once more we rolled over in our

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blankets, and again were startled by an ominous sound.

"Porky's at the saddles!" yelled Bill.

This was an unforgivable offence. We caught him in the act and, feeling that his cup of iniquity was full and running over, sent him to the Happy Hunting Grounds. Perhaps there is room there for this destructive and impertinent nuisance. Here, he seems to have about the same reason for being as has the mosquito.

In the morning we started down the Rock Slide trail to the Smoky, intending to camp on its banks, about sixteen miles from the camp of Rock Slide Creek. It was good going nearly all the way, not too hot, and we were not pestered with flies, altogether a very enjoyable ride. As we ambled along, we drifted lazily into a discussion of things that were essential or non-essential on the trail. We all agreed that the horse came first among the essentials, then feed for the horse. The Warden put his axe next; Bill argued for matches; and I suggested tobacco. It is rather noticeable that those who have been much on the trail learn to take particular care of all these things. The Warden, for instance, had a method of his own for securing his axe to the saddle, and when we were in camp one of his favourite occupations was to sharpen and polish it until it had a perfect edge and a spotless surface. Nothing annoyed him more than to find someone spoiling the

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edge of his axe by using it, for instance, as a spade. Bill, on the other hand, had invented a match-case which, he insisted, could be relied upon to keep the matches dry even under the most adverse conditions. My humble contribution was a sponge bag converted into a tobacco pouch. Its merits were that it would hold a lot of tobacco, keep it reasonably dry, and could be stowed in a corner in which nothing else would fit.

Some one suggested that so far we had not reached our own food, but, on consideration, we were in agreement that in checking off the essentials we would make sure first of a good horse, a good axe, an ample supply of matches, and an equally generous supply of tobacco. As to food, three items stand foremost: bread, or flour, bacon and tea. With a sufficient supply of these, no man need worry. Of course there are other commodities that add materially to one's comfort. For instance, most of us like milk in our tea, and some demand sugar. Although tea stands incomparably first on the trail, coffee makes an agreeable alternative. Then there are potatoes, generally known as "spuds," and canned vegetables. Some kind of jam is also almost a necessity. If one adds pepper and salt and baking powder, the list is practically complete. Everything else is more or less of a luxury, and there is not much room for luxuries on the back of a pack-horse. Some people, of course,

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would call tobacco a luxury, but the opinions of that kind of folk are hardly worth considering.

As a matter of fact, we took with us a considerably more varied lot of grub; the items mentioned above may perhaps be considered the minimum requirements. If one has room enough in the packs for a wider variety, there is no particular sense in paring the list down to a Spartan simplicity. Men travelling on mountain trails are usually hungry enough to eat anything, but, at the same time, they have the natural human objection to monotony in food as in other matters. We therefore took with us a good deal of canned stuff, several kinds of vegetables, jam, and canned fruit, also canned sausages, other meats, and various soups, plenty of bacon, and several dozen eggs. The eggs were a risky experiment, how risky we realized when Bill, lifting the box containing them off the pack, tripped over a root. He went backward, clinging desperately to his fragile load. His excellent intentions of saving the eggs were, however, of little avail, on the other hand, they brought tragic consequences to himself. He sat down violently, with the box in his lap, and before he could disencumber himself his shirt and trousers were plastered with a clammy, slimy mass. When he finally got to his feet, his language was so hair-raising that, for a moment or two, we could only stare at him in awe. After that, -

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one glance at his front exposure was enough,—the Warden and I rolled on the ground in convulsions, until Bill in his rage threatened to throw the rest of the eggs at us. The eggs had been packed in a thin layer of straw and we managed to save enough to make an omelette that night. As for the rest, as we looked down at that awful mess in the bottom of the box, we were reminded of a once-popular song.

I want to go,

I want to go,

I want to go down south in Dixie,

Where the doggone hens am glad to lay

Scrambled eggs in the new-mown hay

It is rather curious how some of us react to that popular commodity, cheese. On the Athabaska trip the Warden had brought with him a long box of Canadian cream cheese. When we had opened it at our first camp, and I had begun to contemplate the prospect of eating, or even helping to eat, a yard or so of solid cheese, six inches square, my gorge rose and I conceived a sudden and intense dislike for the stuff. Cheese seems to be one of those things that, to be appreciated, must be in small quantities, one likes to feel that it is something rare and precious, of which one is privileged to enjoy a very small quantity. A yard of it completely destroys the illusion. Caviare

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offers a similar problem. A very little caviare spread on a piece of dry toast is delicious; but when a well-meaning friend sent me a large jam-jar full of it, from the Lake of the Woods, I felt somehow that the world was altogether too full of caviare. On this trip, we had left the cheese behind



✓ very good forest

CHAPTER VI.

THE DISCOVERY OF SMOKY PASS



AS TWO of us loafed in front of the tent that night, while the Warden made bread for the morrow, I looked down at the waters of the Smoky and my mind went back to an interesting evening I had spent with a friend, now in his eighties, who had carried out one of the C.P.R. surveys under Sandford Fleming. Fleming, with Scotch thoroughness, was determined to try out every possible route for the railway through the Rockies, and it was my friend's job to explore the Smoky Pass route, of which little was known at that time beyond vague Indian reports. All that could be attempted was a quick reconnaissance survey, but even that proved to be an exceedingly difficult and arduous undertaking. It established the fact that Smoky Pass offered a much less favourable route than the Yellowhead, which Sandford Fleming finally selected for the railway. How, for political or other reasons, this ideal route was rejected by the government in favour of the much more difficult

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Kicking Horse Pass route, need not be gone into here. It is perhaps enough to remember that Fleming's judgment was confirmed many years afterward, when two transcontinental railways were carried through the Yellowhead.

I had asked my friend to tell me the story of his discovery of Smoky Pass. He sat for a time, letting his mind run back over the years to the almost forgotten events of 1875.

"I was at Quesnelle, on the Fraser, in December, 1874," he said, "waiting for the river to freeze. It was a lively little town. We were only about sixty miles west of the Cariboo gold camp, the end of the famous Cariboo road. More gold dust was going down to Victoria every week than a man could carry on his back, and it was worth sixteen dollars an ounce. We had a very mixed population. I remember particularly Kuong Lee, who kept a general store. He had a supply of preserved ginger, and some weird Chinese fruits that I used to experiment with. They were rather good, on the whole. However, as we had been there since October, I was heartily tired of Quesnelle and was very glad to get off on our expedition, though it promised to be a pretty hard trip—and so it proved to be.

"The river was late in freezing, so we decided on the end to follow the trail to Fort George, though it is a longer

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and harder road. As the dog teams started out from Quesnelle, the whole town turned out to bid us farewell. They didn't think much of our chances of getting through Smoky Pass. In fact, it wasn't particularly cheering to hear, as their last words: 'Well, God bless you, old fellows! Good-bye! This is the last time we'll see you' However, we got off, and followed the old telegraph line part of the way to Fort George. The snow was deep and heavy, and one of us had to go ahead all the time on snowshoes to break a trail for the dogs. The second day we had to cache some of our stuff, to lighten the sleds, and shortly after were compelled to make another cache, as one of the sleds had rolled down a steep hill and was smashed into kindling-wood.

We were trudging along one day, with heavy packs on our backs, when we met an Indian from Fort George. He had one dog with him, and had packed his kettle, blanket and grub on its back. That seemed a pretty good idea, so we transferred our stuff to the backs of the team whose sled had been smashed. It was comical to see those dogs, that had never carried a pack before, go rolling from side to side along the trail. When one of them tried to jump over a log, the weight of the load would pull him back, and then when he did manage to scramble on top of the log, the weight would carry him over into the deep snow, where he would be content-

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edly enough until someone came along to pick him up and put him on his feet again

"It took us twelve days to get to Fort George by the trail, and we made the distance 125 miles. By the river it would have been about eighty-three. We had to send a man back to pick up the stuff left in the caches. Fort George at that time was in charge of a young Englishman, who had lately joined the Hudson's Bay Company. He was the son of the then Chief Justice of England. He was a very decent chap, and claimed to be a good cook. We had no means of judging, as about the only food at the post then happened to be dried salmon, and even a Paris chef couldn't do much with that. He got so tired of that monotonous diet that he finally killed one of his working oxen. The dogs enjoyed the salmon, and soon picked up after their journey from Quesnelle.

"One day, while we were sitting quietly in the fort smoking, an Indian rushed in and attacked the H.B.C. man with a club. Fortunately, he managed to break the blow with his arm, or it would have been all up with him. He jumped, grabbed the Indian, and they waltzed about the room. When I saw the Indian feeling for his knife, I thought I had better take a hand, so I handed my friend my dog whip, which had a loaded handle. As soon as he felt it in his hand, he broke away from

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the Indian, and gave it to him good. We finally drove him out of the fort. Of course there was great excitement among the people of his tribe, who were gathered outside. It seems that an Indian boy had told lying stories about the H.B.C. man and a squaw, and the factor had kicked the boy well. The latter's father was seeking revenge.

From Fort George we set out with five trains of dogs, toward the end of January. Our route followed the river up to the Forks, not far from Giscome Portage leading to the Peace. From the Forks we ascended the North Fork to the point where the north and south branches meet. After drawing a blank on the North branch, we came back and started up the South branch, which finally brought us to Smoky River Pass.

"It was very heavy work, on both branches of the Fraser, climbing up and down hill all the way, around canyons and through heavy timber. On some of the hills we had to take a sled at a time and put the whole party, two-footed and four-footed, on it, in pulling front or pushing behind, and even then it was tough work. The worst part was going down the other side, which would be equally steep. The sled invariably reached the bottom before the dogs, who went scuttling after it whether they would or no, sometimes bringing up with a crash against a tree at the bottom of the hill.

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"In the deep canyons, where there was a great deal of snow, the going was exceptionally heavy. If it was my turn to break track, I would start off at about five miles an hour, walk away for some distance, then back to the dogs, and then forward again, to give them the benefit of three trappings by the snowshoes. It was very tiresome and monotonous, going over every piece of ground three times. On days like this, we worked hard all day to gain about half a dozen miles.

"That was a very cold January in the mountains. I remember the temperature went down to forty, forty-five, and even fifty-three degrees below zero. We camped with boughs at our back and under us and a good fire in front. Each man had three pairs of blankets, and kept all his clothes on his back. No time was lost in dressing and not much more in washing. Sometimes, we had to shoot one of the dogs whose feet would get into a dreadful state after being frozen and thawed several times. After a time, most of the dogs were lame. Their feet would get wet and the snow would stick to them, and when the poor brutes tried to pull the lumps off with their teeth, in their hurry they would bite their toes fearfully. I made deerskin mitts for some of my dogs, which helped quite a lot.

"We started out with about one month's grub, on the basis of full rations for men and dogs, but, as we

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went on, that estimate had to be modified. One dog after another had to be killed, and as the teams diminished it became necessary to cache some of the heavier provisions. It amused us to find, on checking over the grub about a month after leaving Fort George, that we still had one month's provisions on hand. Of course, from the beginning we had realized the need of running the party on less than full rations, and also I think we were rather optimistic in our use of the multiplication table. We had invented a scale by which to weigh out stuff on the basis that 25 rifle cartridges weighed about a pound. We put a bag of cartridges on one end of a stick and some grub on the other, and in that way laid out the grub for each member of the party. It was a very flexible arrangement, because we could always shorten the rations by taking out a few cartridges while still appearing to be giving good weight. It was cheating of course, but we were cheating our own stomachs.

"There was one particularly bad place on the South Branch, a very steep hill leading down to the river. My dogs took a run when they got near the top, then over they went. I clung on to the rope as long as I could, then let go. When I got to the edge, there was a tree half-way down; on one side of it was the sled, on the other a tangle of dogs. I had to clamber down and chop the tree, whereupon the sled went down to the

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bottom of the hill, the dogs following with a great deal of noise.

"On the 24th of February, we reached the summit of the pass. Though it was too high to be worth considering as a route for the railway, it gave one a distinct thrill to see the little trickle of water running east instead of west. It had been a hard pull up to the pass; it might be a harder pull down the other side, but at least we had reached the pass. We tramped downstream about a mile to make certain, and then took a drink of the water, which seemed to me the sweetest I had drunk for many a day. There was a splendid view from the summit of the pass, with two high mountains guarding either side. One rises in striking grandeur to guard the western entrance to the pass, while the other guards the east. They both presented the same aspect, massive and solitary, with their white summits in the clouds, glaciers running down to the line of vegetation, then the blue and green of the forest covering.

"After blazing a tree and marking it 'Summit between British Columbia and the North West Territory,' we stood with one leg on either side of the line, drank the last of our brandy and gave three cheers. Then we started down the creek, not knowing yet if it would lead us to the Athabaska or the Peace.

"We saw a lot of prairie chickens going down from

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the pass, and it was exasperating not to be able to add them to our diminishing larder, but we had found it necessary to leave our guns behind so as to reduce the weight as much as possible. The river ran down steeply, with rapids and waterfalls. One very fine one had a drop of about 250 feet. I crawled to the edge on my stomach and looked over. The trees looked like small shrubs far below. On each side of the river the rock rose nearly perpendicularly, and altogether it was a hard place to get around. As we were all thirsty, one of the men proposed a drink from the river. He took a small axe, but at the first blow the axe went straight through. You may bet we got out of that in a hurry. We went back about a mile and took to the side of the mountain, which we followed with much trouble till we got a mile below the falls. The sleds were lowered down sideways, and we and the dogs scrambled after them. You can imagine it was steep when I tell you that, when one sled got stuck half-way between some trees and I tried to climb up to help the driver, I simply couldn't make it. A curious feature of that part of the mountains was that there was only one foot of snow in the woods. This unusual condition extends along the eastern slope of the mountains within a belt about sixty miles wide, beyond that, the snow gets deeper again.

"We were losing our dogs one after another. They

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could not stand the pace and the conditions. We regarded each dog lost with mixed feelings. It meant one dog less to pull the supplies, but at the same time it was one mouth less to feed and the grub was getting perilously low. As a matter of fact, there was now so little food left that nothing could be spared for the dogs. To put it bluntly, the dogs were dying of starvation.

"The men of the party were by now showing the effects of hard travelling and rapidly-dwindling rations. To add to our discomfort, the hard going brought on *mal de raquette*, familiar enough to any one who has travelled on snow-shoes for a long time through such country as we were now exploring. I guessed what was the matter when, one morning, my fellow engineer started out to break trail with a very white face and set lips. I, of course, took his place and he went to the rear. Then I began to feel pain in my ankles, which got rapidly worse. This physical pain was bad enough, but what worried us most was the uncertainty as to our position. As we proceeded down the river we were constantly swinging from hope to despair. When the stream took a turn to the east, we thought it was going to fall into the Athabaska and our hearts beat high. Then it would make a sharp turn to the north and we were sure that it was the Smoky and must lead to the Peace, and our spirits would drop to zero.

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"On the 3rd of March, we camped at the mouth of a small stream coming in from the south. That day, another dog died of starvation, and the river was turning more and more to the north. We were convinced by this time that it was the Smoky. We spent the day in camp, making packs and a cache in which we would leave all our heavy stuff, having decided to strike across country steering by the compass with our packs on our backs. The packs were not very heavy by this time as very little food remained, but, with *mal de voyage*, they were heavy enough. Sextants, stationery, books, extra clothing, were all left behind. The last item did not bother us as we were still wearing the same things we had put on at Quesnelle. In fact, we were a dirty lot by this time, our last wash having been at the summit of the pass. I think the purpose of that wash had been to leave all the British Columbia dust behind us. Fortunately Johnny, our Indian, remained good-natured and philosophical, although he evidently did not think much of the trip. When things went wrong, his only comment would be: '*Cultus kopa muka*,' meaning: 'What's bad for me is bad for you.'

"The following day, we climbed steadily until we reached the top of a ridge, where we camped. Before us lay a wide valley. In the morning we started downhill. That might seem an advantage but, as a matter

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of fact, it is worse than climbing, when one is suffering from *mal de raguelette*. At the bottom we found a large river which we thought was the Athabaska. We followed it up for a short distance and then turned off on our old course along a tributary which seemed to come from the right direction. We were so uncertain about our whereabouts that we called it 'This River.' As we turned a corner, I saw, about 150 feet in front of us, two moose in the river. These were the first living things we had seen since we crossed the summit and, as our meat was nearly gone, it was bitterly disappointing to know that we had no means of killing them.

"On the 9th, we left the creek, which was as crooked as a cork-screw, and struck across country again, over hills and valleys and through deep snow. There was little food left of any kind and our stomachs felt very, very empty. We came to the summit of ridge and looked down into an immense valley about two miles wide. We felt sure this must be the Athabaska and that our troubles were over. When we reached the bottom, however, we found nothing but a muskeg with a small creek running through it. The next day, we came upon a trail blazed as if by white men. This and the capture of a rabbit, which made a sumptuous meal for six men, sent our spirits up again.

"For the next few days it snowed heavily and we

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had very bad going. We were now reduced to eating our few remaining dogs—dogs, too, which had been starved and worked nearly to death. I don't believe dog soup is good, but it goes well enough when you are desperately hungry. Our Indians had at last become discouraged. They were waiting about never seeing their friends again, which did not help to cheer us much. We felt that they needn't howl so about such a small matter. Others had friends and just as strong feelings for them but had to bottle them up.

"Curious how, under certain conditions, the most vulgar thing has power to stir the emotions. We frankly had not the remotest idea where we were, our food had practically reached the vanishing point, and we had about given up hope. Then, we came upon a pile of horse dung, and cheered lustily, feeling that we must be within reach of some human habitation. Buster, my favourite dog, died here.

"In the morning, it stopped snowing and we saw, about twenty miles away, a high rock which looked like Roche Miette. For us, much depended on whether it was or not. We turned toward it and travelled as fast as the condition of the ground and our weak state would admit, but did not make very much progress. We camped on a ridge between two valleys. Beyond it lay some hills and still in the distance what we hoped

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was Roche Miette. We were hoping that the Athabaska lay in the valley between the hills and the distant peaks. If so, we were safe. If it were beyond the mountain, we had neither enough grub nor enough strength to carry us through. In that event we had about reached the end of our tether.

"I can remember that camp vividly enough. Opposite sat the Indians, Johnny, as usual, silent and unpassive, the other two with their heads in their hands, sobbing out their grief, which was not particularly cheerful for us but to which we had grown accustomed. Beside me sat my companion, very thin, very white, and very much subdued. On the other side of me sat the last member of our party, a young halfbreed, chewing tobacco and looking about used up. He had seen Roche Miette once from the east side, but wasn't sure if this peak were it or not. I knew it only from a photograph. For myself, I do not know how to describe my feelings. I did not honestly believe the Athabaska was in the near valley and consequently I was convinced that we had not many more days to live. My mind had wandered away to home and those that I had left behind me. I wondered if our bones would ever be discovered and if so when and by whom. Not that it mattered. On the whole, however, I was glad that having started we had not turned back, as we had been tempted to do more than once.

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"On the day following that terrible evening of doubt and uncertainty, we had travelled only six miles when we struck what I recognized at once as Lac Brulé. We proceeded up the lake to Jasper House. The post was unoccupied but we found a family of Indians there, who feasted us on boiled rabbits. We made our distance from the pass about 119 miles, and from Fort George, 205. Altogether, we had travelled about 600 miles.

"The rest of the journey to Fort Edmonton was comparatively uneventful. The Indians were able to let us have a little dried meat, but not nearly enough to carry us through. All our dogs were gone but three and they were reduced to skin and bone. We left Jasper House in a gale of wind, carrying all we had on our backs and leaving the dogs behind. Our rations gave out entirely before we got to Lake St Ann's. We met a trapper on his way from Edmonton to Jasper House, who gave us some tea. That was all he could spare. We had a cup of strong tea immediately, and by that time were so weak that the tea actually made us drunk. Fortunately, we still had a supply of tobacco. At the Mission at St Ann's our troubles were over as we were able to get sufficient supplies to carry us through to Edmonton, where we rested for some days to get back our strength, before travelling on east to Fort Garry."

CHAPTER VII.

A BUNCH OF ROUGHNECKS



WE BROKE camp on the Smoky, and with some difficulty found a place where the river might be forded, then climbed up over Vimy Ridge, and down again to Souchez Creek. We crossed the creek and followed a fairly good trail to Twin Tree Lake, the head of which was guarded by a solitary moose, who hurriedly deserted his post as we approached. There, we passed an unusually large beaver dam but its industrious little builders were nowhere in sight. From the summit of Vimy Ridge we got a splendid view of that part of the Rockies. Directly opposite, a pyramidal mountain overshadowed Indian Cache on the Smoky, close to the boundary of the Park, and in the background rose the glittering peaks of the continental divide. The Smoky wound its way like a vast snake through the valley below.

We stopped for lunch on Julian Creek, and made camp a few miles from Byng Pass. Several of these place-names, it will be noticed, are reminiscent of a



Donkey Valley

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former and very popular Governor-General of Canada, who spent some time in Jasper Park. Like his eminent successor, Lord Byng welcomed these opportunities of throwing off for a time the exacting and often tedious demands of his high office, and wandering as a mere man over mountain trails. The great general of the World War, who sometimes seemed rather shy and reserved at formal functions in Ottawa, proved himself to be a rare companion on the trail or around the camp-fire, friendly, utterly unassuming, and able and willing at all times to tell a good story, grave or gay, drawn from his own abundant experience. He endeared himself to every man with whom he came in contact in Jasper Park.

We had had a pretty heavy day's work and made camp early. As we sat around the fire, after supper, smoking and chatting, the talk drifted to mining and the ways of miners, the attempts made from time to time to find gold in the sand bars of the Athabaska, and the possibilities of a big strike some day in northern British Columbia, perhaps on the Liard, where coarse gold had already been found, with other indications of possibly rich deposits. The Warden had been in Alaska and the Yukon in the days when gold dust was the medium of exchange. We had tried more than once to get him talking about his own experiences and what he had learned from old-timers, but, hitherto, had always drawn

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a blank. On this night, he was in a more receptive mood and seemed to see things in the heart of the fire that reminded him of other days.

"I suppose," he said, "neither of you ever heard of Cassiar Jim? He was a miner many years ago in the Cassiar District, over here in British Columbia, and later drifted north to Alaska. He was one of those lucky chaps that always struck it rich wherever he went, but it slipped through his fingers as fast as he found it. Funny part of it was, whatever camp he tried, he never stayed with the crowd; nearly always climbed up to some inaccessible spot above the timber line, where the old timers claimed it was hopeless to expect to find pay dirt. Hopeless or not, Cassiar Jim found it there every time. His rich claims in Nome, Dawson and Iditarod were all way up the mountain-side, in quite impossible places from a prospector's point of view, the kind of places to which greenhorns were sent when they asked for advice.

"Occasionally, just to show that he could find the stuff anyhow, he'd turn up the pay streak on a creek. That was what happened at Fairbanks, the camp on the Tanana. Jim, as usual, was sitting pretty on a rich claim. It was rich enough to excite the greed of some of the shyster lawyers who in those days had settled down like a lot of vultures around the mining camps of

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Alaska. They hadn't much originality in their methods, but, as a matter of fact, the situation didn't call for much variation. It wouldn't have worked in a more civilized part of the world, but it was good enough for Alaska. It was a sort of 'heads-I-win-tails-you-lose' proposition, made possible by the simple-mindedness of the miners and the stupidity or worse of the mining laws. Occasionally, as in the case of Cassiar Jim, the shysters ran up against a man who wouldn't be bullied out of his claim, but even then they had the cards stacked against the miner.

"Following their usual procedure, they hired a man to jump Jim's claim, in the dark of the moon, thus clouding his title. A few days later, they sent up an ex pug, in charge of a gang of men, to install a border on the ground, claiming that they intended to commence work. When the gang reached the claim, Jim was waiting for them with a gun. He had marked out a dead line, which he pointed out to them. 'The first man,' he said, 'that tries to cross that line, is going to commit suicide.' They attempted to rush him and he promptly shot the leader. The gang then retired, packing the wounded man out to hospital, where he eventually recovered. Jim claimed he was not to blame for that, as he had done his best to kill him.

"The lawyers then went after Jim in the courts.

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He won his case in the end, but it cost him forty thousand dollars. He told me it was well worth that to beat them, but he couldn't see that he hadn't beaten them, after all. The lawyers won either way, as they always did. If they got the claim, they owned valuable property; if they lost the claim, they still had the profits of the lawsuit, in this case forty thousand dollars. However, Jim kept his claim, and eventually cleared about sixty thousand dollars over and above the costs of his suit.

"It was very difficult to get a clear title to a mining claim, under the regulations that used to be in force in Alaska. A queer practice grew up out of that situation. A man who owned a claim would arrange with a friend—of course, it would have to be some one he could rely upon—to jump the claim and take the case into court. The friend, naturally, would put up a lame defence and the real owner would then get a court decision, which happened at that time to be the only title that could not be disputed.

"Sometimes, bullies would jump claims on their own when they thought they could get away with it, without being hired to do so by one of the shyster lawyers. At the time of the Iditarod stampede in 1910, a little French-Canadian named Jean Baptiste—I have forgotten the rest, if I ever knew it—located a promising-looking piece

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of ground on Willow Creek. One day in December, he was busy sinking a prospect hole in frozen ground and was down to a depth of about four feet when he was approached by a big Finlander named Nels, who told him that the ground had been improperly staked and that he had just relocated it. He ordered Jean Baptiste off the ground, making all sorts of threats as to what he would do to him if he found him in that neighbourhood again.

"As Nels was over six feet and had the reputation of being a hard case and, incidentally, was armed with a double-bitted axe which he was flourishing in the air, Jean saw that he had better make the best of it, at any rate for the time being. So he went away to his cabin.

"Next day, however, the plucky little chap was back at his prospect hole, and it was only a short time before he saw Nels coming towards him on the dead run, making ugly demonstrations with his axe. When Nels was a few yards off, Jean reached over to a pile of brush heaped at the edge of the prospect hole, pulled out a rifle, and promptly shot Nels, killing him instantly. He then went in to Discovery, the mining settlement, told what had happened, and said that he had had to shoot Nels in self-defence, as he certainly would have attacked him with the axe.

"Men went out to investigate and found everything

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as Jean had said. There were Nels' marks in the snow; there was the double-bitted axe; and there were the new stakes put up when Nels attempted to jump the claim. Jean was exonerated and nothing further was ever done about it, the general feeling being that the country was well rid of Nels. As for the little French-Canadian, word got around that he was a poor man to play horse with, and he had no further trouble with claim-jumpers.

"Taking them by and large, those old-timers of Alaska and the Yukon were for the most part a pretty decent lot. They certainly were hard boiled, but they had a code of their own which they generally lived up to. As a code, perhaps it wouldn't have been much use in Ontario or Pennsylvania but it fitted well enough into the conditions of the gold camps. Men had been going in and coming out of that north country for at least twenty years before the discovery of the Klondyke. Some had formerly been buffalo hunters, others had taken an active part in the sheep and cattle wars of Wyoming, the Dakotas and other western states, and I knew of two who had taken part in the Lincoln County Feud in the Panhandle. Mostly, they were men who had been raised on the frontier, had lived and fought there all their lives, and had gradually been driven farther and farther afield by the advent of law and order, until they had reached the Arctic Circle.

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"They were hard-living men, who looked upon life as a gamble, with the sky as the limit, and they played the game according to their lights, high, wide and handsome. They were good men to tie to, and bad men to cross, and they were quite capable of taking care of themselves in any company, with the possible exception of the shyster lawyer. They were the men who discovered and exploited Rampart, Eagle, Circle, Sixty Mile, Forty Mile, The Bars on the Stewart, and a number of minor diggings, before the Klondyke was even heard of. Some entered the Yukon by way of St. Michaels', proceeding up the river by boat, others went by way of Dyea, over the Chukoot Pass, and down the Yukon. Many of them would drop down over the Chukoot in the fall of the year, winter in Juneau, and return in the spring over the same pass.

"It was six of these men whom Captain McLean—the original of Captain Larsen in Jack London's *Sea Wolf*—was so ill advised as to 'small Shanghai' at Juneau. He might as well have tried to tie a knot in the tail of a tiger. Captain McLean was a tough man, himself, and had a hard name in the Arctic and along the Alaskan coast. Also, he had several killings to his name, none of them at all creditable. He had no idea what he was letting himself in for when he sailed his ship into Bering Sea with those half-dozen wild cats under his hatches.

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He was accustomed to bull-dozing and manhandling sailors from the crimp shops of San Francisco and Seattle, men who had been brought up to believe in the divine right of sea captains, but the men he picked up in Juneau had never heard of the rights and privileges of a sea-captain, and would have paid no attention to them if they had. They were quite capable of prodding the devil with his own pitchfork, if he got in their way.

"This is the story of Captain McLean's adventure as I heard it in Juneau. He had sailed out of San Francisco on a trading trip up the coast and into the Arctic, but found himself short handed as some of his men had deserted at Seattle, and he had not been able to replace them. However, off Juneau, it occurred to him that he might put in there and pick up some of the miners from up-country who, he had been told, were in the habit of wintering in Juneau. These men were an unknown species to the Captain, but he had all a sailor's contempt for a land lubber and was quite confident he could handle anything on two legs.

"He sailed into Juneau, got hold of an unscrupulous bar-tender, and promised him a very liberal fee if he would dope the liquor of six able-bodied miners and give him the high-sign when they were down and out, so that he could get them aboard.

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"Everything went according to plan. There was not the slightest difficulty in getting the six victims drunk and aboard ship. The fun began, however, when they were brought to by a few well-placed kicks in their ribs. Then all hell broke loose, but no one was ever able to get a straight story as to what actually took place, beyond the fact that the captain and his mate were both badly manhandled, made to clean and swab their own decks, and forced to about ship and return to Juneau. What was very noticeable was that the shanghaied men, who had been dead-broke when they were put on board the ship, returned with their pockets full of money. Needless to say, an enthusiastic search was made by the amateur sailors for the bar-tender, but he beat them to it by slipping aboard an out-going vessel bound for Seattle and was never seen again in that part of the world.

"The report went round that the miners had taken forcible possession of the ship and everything in it, and had seriously thought of hanging the captain and his mate from the yard arm. What had saved them was not so much the miners' fear of consequences as the fact that the miners knew nothing about sailing ships and could not get back to Juneau without the assistance of the captain. The miners had compromised, therefore, by helping themselves to whatever looked good and

heaping indignities upon the captain and his mate. I was told that after the first excitement wore off, the way in which the captain had fooled himself tickled their grim sense of humour and they thoroughly enjoyed the voyage back to Juneau.

"They were a happy-go-lucky lot, those old timers of the north, sometimes with more gold dust than they knew what to do with, oftener upon the edge of starvation. They took it all very philosophically. Jerry Baker was a type. His scheme of life consisted of two things, prospecting and drinking, and he made a whole-hearted job of whichever he happened to be engaged in at the time. Though he had, on various occasions, struck it lucky, he had never benefitted to any extent, or at any rate he had never got what most of us would consider any benefit out of his gold, a good drunk being his estimate of the value of a good claim.

"Jerry was prospecting in the Kantishna country when that stampede started. During his wanderings, he ran across a cabin empty but plentifully supplied with grub. The owner was Jim Chronister, who was himself prospecting the neighbouring creeks and consequently was frequently away from his cabin. Jim soon found out that some one was making regular use of his place, for he never returned without finding a collection of dirty dishes scattered about. Jim was a good-natured

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chap and didn't begrudge the food, but he did object to having to clean up another man's dishes, so he left an open note on the table saying: 'You are welcome to the grub, but clean up when you leave.' On his next return to the cabin he found scrawled on the table with charcoal 'Don't be a grouch: wash your own dirty dishes, Jerry Baker!'

"Jerry took in the Iditarod stampede and managed to get in on the pay streak, but as usual traded off his claim to a saloon keeper and went on one glorious drunk. After some days, when he had corrupted about half the settlement and reduced himself to a comatose state, the saloon-keeper saw a chance to get rid of him by persuading a man, who was leaving with a dog-team for a stampede in the Reindeer country, to take Jerry along with him.

"Dead to the world, he was packed into the sled, and the saloon-keeper, as a parting gift, or perhaps with some hazy idea of squaring his conscience, slipped a ten dollar bill into the pocket of his mackinaw, hoping he had seen the last of him until he made another strike. But he was out of luck, for within three days Jerry was back, figuring how much whisky he could buy for ten dollars—not very much in that country in those days. What had happened was this: the morning after leaving Iditarod, Jerry had come to life in an open camp, under

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a spruce tree. He didn't much care how or why he had got there, until, while hunting for his pipe, he found the ten dollar bill. That was enough. Jerry, stone-broke, was a philosopher, reconciled to the inevitable; but Jerry with ten dollars still in his jeans was quite a different proposition. He promptly hit the other man on the nose and told him, in language that I would not care to repeat within the boundaries of Jasper Park, that he would have nothing more to do with him. Any man who was such a fool as to leave town while his passenger still had the price of a bottle on him, was not fit to travel with. He turned his back on him and walked back to Iditarod, while the other, glad to be rid of Jerry on such easy terms, continued his journey.

"I think it was true that to most of the men who went into the north the thing that tempted them was not so much the making of a fortune as the fact that mining was a tremendously exciting game, a huge gamble, out of which a man might draw anywhere from nothing to a million, and the man who drew a blank was oftener happier than his companion who struck it rich. In most cases they were both back again in the field in a comparatively short time, leading or following a stampede to some new creek, the first because he was reduced to a grub-stake, and the latter because he had blown in his fortune in a brief but very hectic course of high living

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as it was understood in the gold country. Some, like Jerry Baker, with single-track minds, devoted themselves to holding open house in their favourite saloon. Others, determined to get rid of their newly-acquired wealth as quickly as possible, gravitated between the saloon and the gambling joint. The latter, as managed in Alaska, was the most efficient means ever invented for separating a man from his money.

"Somewhere around 1910, gambling was made illegal in Alaska, that is, officially; in reality it was just as open as ever. The two men responsible for the enforcement of the laws were the District Commissioner and the Deputy-Marhsall, both political appointees, and they received a nominal salary from the Government, plus al. fines up to, I think, three thousand dollars each. Naturally they weren't overlooking any breaches of the law punishable with a fine. Gambling was their meal-ticket. Round November, when the 'open cut' work shut down owing to freeze-up, the men used to drift in to the nearest mining camp with their summer's wages, often quite a considerable 'poke', as ten dollars a day was the standard wage. The professional gamblers were all ready for the miners, with stud-poker, draw, monte, black jack, etc. The Deputy-Marshall would stall around for about two months, by which time most of the loose cash had drifted into the hands of some one

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gambler. This man he would arrest and take before the District Commissioner, who would figure out how much money the man probably had, and then fine him accordingly, adding, purely as a matter of form, 'or in default six months' imprisonment.' The gambler would pay the fine, which was regarded as a perfectly legitimate rake-off, and everything was lovely.

"But the winter of 1910 in Discovery was different. Things didn't work out according to schedule. Bismark, a smart German Jew, happened to be the fortunate professional gambler, and when he was arrested and fined 'one thousand five hundred dollars or six months', he said 'six months, please! There's nothing doing in my business, any way, until next summer, and I may just as well be a guest of the Government as board myself.' The old fox knew they couldn't make him work, and also that there wasn't a jail within six hundred miles. The District Commissioner looked at the Deputy-Marshall, and the Deputy-Marshall looked back at the District Commissioner, and they both looked severely at Bismark, whose grin they found peculiarly exasperating. But they were helpless, and he knew that they were helpless. He wasn't playing the game as it was understood in Alaska, but what could you expect from a German Jew!

"The outcome was that the District Commissioner

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had to hire a furnished cabin for the prisoner's accommodation, had to hire a man to serve as jailer, had to have the wood chopped for them both, and had to have their meals sent in from a restaurant, for they both refused to turn a hand, and there was nothing in the law to make them. The Government paid, the District Commissioner and the Deputy-Marshall lost a fat fine, and the community had a good laugh out of the situation. Bismark and his jailer read and played cribbage during the day, and in the evening used to go visiting around the settlement, and generally would get into a poker game. Nobody said anything, for they were both good fellows, according to northern standards, and had the sympathy of the crowd. Also, there was an election coming off shortly, so that the District Commissioner and the Deputy-Marshall thought it wise to keep their eyes shut.

"One night, however, Bismark got very much interested in a game of draw, and paid no attention to his jailer's hints that it was time to be going home. Eventually, when it got to be two in the morning, the jailer was fed up and shouted across the room 'Bismark, if you don't quit and come home right away, I'm going alone, and if I do, I'll lock the door, then you'll be out of luck!' The threat was too much for the Jew, who

knew a good home when he had it. He threw down his hand and followed his jailer back to the cabin.

"Gold mining seems to be, in one way, like novel-writing. There is the man who tries and fails; then there is the man who writes one successful novel and writes himself out, and the miner who strikes it rich once and once only; finally, there is the Edgar Wallace type of novelist, and the corresponding type of miner who goes out and finds another gold mine as soon as the proceeds of the former one have been turned over to the saloon-keeper and the professional gambler. Dick Lowe was an example of the 'once only' miner, and Jack McQuestion was the repeater.

"Dick Lowe's find was a pure fluke. You remember that the richest piece of placer ground ever located in the North Country lay at the mouth of Skookum Gulch putting into Eldorado Creek. When it was realized just how rich Eldorado was, it became necessary to establish a base line and have all the ground surveyed in order to conform to the Canadian mining laws and avoid disputes. Among the survey crew was an axeman, Dick Lowe, a good enough fellow, but plain roughneck. During the survey, it was found that a certain piece of ground, about one hundred feet by eight hundred feet, was open, that is, it was not comprised in any mining claim as determined by the survey. It was so small

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no one paid any attention to it. Dick Lowe, however, took a chance and staked it, shortly afterwards letting a ten per cent lay to a Frenchman, which means that the Frenchman was to pay ten per cent of the gross output to Lowe for the privilege of working the claim.

'About a month later, the Frenchman came to Low and told him he was through: the ground was a blank; in other words, there was no gold in it. Lowe said 'All right, I can possibly sell it to some chechaco for a few dollars and get a drunk out of it.'

'In that case,' replied the Frenchman, 'maybe I will take a chance myself and buy the ground, if it is cheap enough.'

"After some dickering, the Frenchman offered one thousand dollars. This made Lowe suspicious, in view of the man's previous statement that the ground was a blank, and he said he would have a look at the place before deciding. The Frenchman tried to persuade him to close at once, but Lowe was now convinced that there was a nigger in the woodpile and told him bluntly that there was nothing doing.

"When he got to the ground, one look was enough. The dirt was fairly lousy with gold. Lowe put in a crew of men, and cleaned up eight hundred thousand dollars, which went slightly better than one hundred dollars to the square foot.

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"He devoted the next three years to painting Dawson as red as the Police would permit. At the end of that time he was stone-broke. He was afterwards grub-staked to several of the new camps, by men who thought he might be lucky enough to repeat, but he never did. He died a few years ago, a pauper.

"Jack McQuestion, the other chap I mentioned, was without doubt the best known of all the sourdoughs of the North, previous to the Dawson stampede. He ran a store on the Yukon, near Sixty Mile, and one of his articles of faith was that every man prospecting in that country was entitled to a winter's grub stake, whether or not he had the money to pay for it. He lived right up to this rule, and every October took an inventory of his stores, then figured who was out in the hills, and how many men there were to see through the winter. Then he made up the necessary number of outfits.

"When a man drifted into Jack's store, he got his quota, and that was all he could get, no matter how much money he had, not even an extra pound of butter or bacon was to be had at any price, until everyone had been supplied. Jack was a bit of an autocrat in his own way. He had his standards and he not only lived up to them himself, but made every one else do likewise. The man who had failed to pan gold and came in broke, received exactly the same outfit as the man who had made



A close race



Come on in, the water's fine!

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a rich strike and had money to burn. I said that Jack was an autocrat. He made them all toe the mark, rich and poor. But he was also an optimist. He had faith in the fair-mindedness of the average miner and claimed they would all pay some day when they had the money. Somehow or other, they all did eventually.

"Men who should know told me that Jack outfitted Jim Dunsmore for twelve years without receiving a cent in return. Jim was a hard worker and a good prospector, but he had awfully hard luck. Regularly every spring he would take to the hills, hoping to strike pay dirt, and he surely covered a lot of country looking for it, but every fall as regular as clock work, he would turn up broke and draw another outfit from Jack, without a word being said as to notes, interest, or anything else. Jim just had a continuous run of bad luck for twelve years, then the change came, and he cleaned up big in the Koyukuk Country, and squared himself with Jack.

"McQuestion was married to a squaw, known by every one as 'Aunt Kate'. She was a thoroughly good woman, with a fine character, and every one thought the world of her. I might explain, in case you do not know, that there were two classes of so-called squaw-men in the North Country. The white man who took or married a squaw and sank to her level, living native fashion and raising a brood of half breed children whom he allowed

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to run wild, was despised and ostracized by white men and natives alike. Such a man was Carmack (Sewash George), commonly, but incorrectly, credited with being the discoverer of the Klondyke. Then there was the white man who married a squaw and treated her like a white woman, raising her to his level and living according to the white man's standards, the children were educated, and if funds permitted, were frequently sent outside to school and college. Such men were Gordon Bettles, Jack McQuestion, and others, and they were never referred to as squaw-men.

' When the Klondyke was struck, McQuestion got in on some good ground on Bonanza and cleaned up better than one hundred thousand dollars. He decided that he had seen all he wanted of the north, so Aunt Kate and he pulled out for Los Angeles. Jack was talked into building a house by the real estate men. He built the house, but kept it a secret from his wife. The house was a pretty ornate affair with a good deal of colour about it, and when it was finished he took Aunt Kate down and showed it to her. Aunt Kate grunted non-committally. However they moved in. Next morning, Jack couldn't find his wife anywhere in the house, but eventually located her in the garden and, to his surprise, she was putting up a tepee. When he asked what the big idea was,

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she replied 'Me no like house—all same bird-cage—me live tepee.'

"In the early days, Alaska was decidedly a tough country for those who were not hard-boiled, and the hardships and disappointments accounted for the large proportion of suicides and men going crazy. Suicides presented no particular problem for they were planted under the handiest spruce tree, but the insane were quite another matter, as they had to be taken outside to the nearest asylum, which was located, I think, in Seattle. It was a costly job, for it meant buying a dog-team and hiring a man to look after the 'out' and drive the team, as well as incidental expenses, the cost of stopping at road-houses, and the transportation from Seward to Seattle.

"In the fall of 1908, there were two Swedes, Nels and Ollie, who had drifted into the Koyukuk country, prospecting, and had gone flat-broke. They were strictly up against it and couldn't figure out how they were going to weather the winter, until Nels had a bright thought which he confided to Ollie, the game being that Ollie was to go crazy and Nels would get the job of taking him out. They would travel in the best of style, and Nels would get the going wage of ten dollars a day, which would mount up to a tidy sum by the time they had traveled the eight hundred miles between Coldfoot

and Seward, not counting the days at sea. The plan worked fine, though at Coldfoot there were several other men who tried for the job of taking Ollie out, but it seemed as if Nels was the only man who could handle him. Ollie fought everyone else, and as he was a big man, the other fellows decided they had better step aside. Ollie seemed to get better during the sea voyage and was completely cured on their arrival at Seattle. The doctors had their suspicions but turned him loose and said nothing.

"Talking of hard-boiled guys, I suppose Dan Harrigan was one of the toughest specimens we had in the North Country. When M. J. Heney was building the Copper River and North West Railway for the Morgan-Guggenheim Syndicate, he took with him certain key men who had followed his contracting fortunes for twenty years and better. Not least amongst them was Dan, a great, big, raw-boned, fighting, Nova Scotia Irishman. His specialty was to fight and thrash any obstreperous sub-contractor or section man who was making or looking for trouble, and there were always quite a number of that type around construction work, and some of them pretty tough. But the tougher they were, the better Dan liked them, and he had the reputation of never having been worsted in a rough-and-tumble. He was a dirty fighter, without mercy, and he was both feared and

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hated all along the line. His style of fighting was known as 'dog eat dog'.

"Well, one day Dan was walking along the right of way, which ran just above the river. He was throwing out his chest and bedevilling the men, gingering them up, he called it, - when he stepped on a loose boulder and he and the boulder landed in the river. The Copper you must know is a swift and dangerous river. Once in it, there is little enough chance of ever getting out, though occasionally it has been done.

"Dan was making a great fight for his life, and it was even money as to whether he or the river would win, when a little Cockney grabbed a big steel crowbar and threw it into the water close to Dan, yelling 'Grab that, you big Mick, and save yourself!' Everyone laughed,—they couldn't help it,—but not a soul put out a hand to help Dan. However, he eventually managed to get ashore under his own steam. The Cockney went on with his work, and though Dan looked murder at him, sideways, he never made a move or said a word. I think Dan realized that he had crowded the men just a little too far for his own safety."

CHAPTER VIII

BACK TO THE SNAKE INDIAN



IF YOU will glance at the map, you will notice that we were swinging around in a very irregular circle, up the Snake Indian and over the northern boundary of Jasper Park to a tributary of the Smoky, then down to the Smoky itself, and up it to the Park boundary again, and in a somewhat roundabout way to Julian Creek. We were now on our way to Byng Pass.

That afternoon, as we rode along the trail, or what there was of it, I was entertained with the ways of some of our pack-horses. They seemed to have eyes in the back of their heads. If you arrived behind one and threatened to toss a pine cone at him, though you could see nothing but the tips of his ears behind the pack, he seemed to sense what you were about and would immediately spurt ahead. But if you were content to pelt him only with language, however hectic, he took it very philosophically; you might shout your head off and he would pay no attention. Also, one's riding-horse seemed

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to be aware at once, although apparently he was paying no attention at the time, that one had forgotten to put on spurs. His speed sensibly diminished and nothing could persuade him that it might be mended, until one dismounted, found the spurs, and put them on again. After that, it was quite unnecessary to use them. He took the hint. A good deal of nonsense has been written about the cruelty of wearing spurs. It is not the use but the abuse of spurs that is cruel. Properly used, they serve merely as a reminder to one's horse that he is loafing on his job and must wake up. The saying that the kind man is kind to his horse is as true in the mountains as elsewhere, but unkindness does not consist in keeping him to his task. It is usually the result of ignorance or stupidity or selfishness, and consists in saddling the horse so badly that sores are formed under the blanket, or keeping him too long on the trail, forcing the pace through difficult country, neglecting to take off his saddle or pack at the noon camp, and putting your own comfort before his at the end of the day's ride. Foxy old Blaze was immediately in front of me, that afternoon. He would reach round for a mouthful of grass or succulent weed, and as he did so I could see him glance back to find out if I were watching him. If I lifted my arm, off he would go.

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As I jogged along beside the warden on a fairly open but of trail, he pointed out several trees that had been neatly stripped of their bark.

"Who did that?" I asked

"Porcupine," he answered, with supreme disgust. "They are a perfect pest, destroy everything, but we are not allowed to interfere with their pleasure. One got into my cabin not long ago, dug under it and came up through the floor, destroying everything as it went. Found one on either side of the door as I went out one morning. They looked at me and ambled off in very leisurely fashion. Some people call that charming confidence in human nature. I call it damned cheek. The wolverine, however, is a good deal worse than the porcupine. One got into my cabin by lifting a loose board in the floor, which fell back into place. A bear would have felt himself trapped and would have got away through the window. The wolverine was much more intelligent. After it had messed up the place to its taste, it lifted the board and went out the way it had come. The wolverine will make a fool of a trapper oftener than any other animal. It is the most difficult of all the fur bearing animals to trap. It soon learns cunning, or is born in it. It may get his foot caught once in a trap—but never again."

From our noon camp we climbed up over Byng

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Pass, and presently found ourselves back on the Snake Indian, at its very source. It is fed by five glaciers, the nearest of which comes down from Hoodoo Mountain. Much of this day's travel was jungling through untravelled country, and Robert had no opinion at all of jungling, and yet he had little enough reason to complain, unless the newly cut trail happened to be on a hillside, when the going was necessarily pretty heavy for a pack-horse. Robert, in fact, was old enough to prefer the well-established thoroughfare, over more or less level ground, and affording occasional mouthfuls of wayside weeds, which he could sometimes take in his stride. The rapture of the explorer was not for him. He knew all the various types of mountain trails. They could offer no surprises. Experience had taught him to follow the lines of least resistance.

One afternoon, we got into very boggy ground, approaching the headwaters of a creek. There seemed to be no alternative but to struggle through as best we could. When finally we pulled out on to firmer ground, with all the horses pretty well winded, I noticed that Robert was not of the party. Looking back, I saw him complacently picking his way along an indistinguishable ridge well over to our left. One imagined him saying to himself: "Serves them right for not trusting to my leadership!" Some time afterward, when we had got

back on to a comfortable trail, he happened to be ahead of me. Stepping aside of his own motion, he let me go by, as if to say: "After you, my dear sir." His manner was irreproachable, but there was something peculiarly disconcerting in the cynical and rather contemptuous glance of his ancient eye.

On this branch of the Snake Indian, Hoodoo Creek, we ran into a telephone construction camp. It seemed odd, after being out of touch with all the appliances of civilization for some time, to run into this group of men busily stringing wire through the forest. It is quite a difficult job, as trees must often be cut down to get a clear line for the wire, and it has to be carried through all sorts of country: muskeg, rock, barren hillside, and up over mountain passes, also, the problem of maintenance is quite a serious one, as parts of the line may be brought down at any time by falling trees or a landslide. An added difficulty is the distance from the base, all food and supplies having to be packed in, sometimes over very sketchy trails. The telephone, however, means a great deal in the administration of the Park, as it keeps headquarters in constant touch with all the outlying wardens and, among other advantages, makes it possible to get fire equipment out with the least possible delay.

The next day, we left Hoodoo Creek and climbed up over Maynard Pass,—named after the former Superin-



Valley of the Swains

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tendent of Jasper Park, Colonel Maynard Rogers,—to the West Fork of the South Branch of the Snake Indian. Our camp here was so comfortable in every respect and was amid such delightful surroundings that we called it Paradise Camp. After supper, I sat on a grassy mound by the river bank, enjoying the wonderful views that one could get from that point, of a dozen or more peaks, many of them as yet without names. It had been a rather tiring day's journey, however, and after a while I was glad to get back to the camp. A fair amount of nonsense is written about the mountains and one's capacity to enjoy them. I do not think any one could get more real enjoyment out of the Rockies than I do. I return to them again and again with the same enthusiasm, but one's capacity for enjoying a particular scene at one time is strictly limited. No one can continue to gaze at the same picture, however beautiful, for an indefinite period. Not even a poet can draw more than a certain amount of inspiration from one particular view.

The following day, we left Paradise Camp, climbed up over Idaleen Pass and down to the North Fork of the Snaring River. The season was late and large patches of snow still remained on the mountain side, on the summit of the pass. The stillness up there was broken only by the raucous cry of a hawk and the distant roar of an avalanche. We climbed down from the pass through

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a perfect wilderness of windfalls and it was very slow and tiresome travelling. One realizes too that jungling, particularly on a hillside, involves several minor discomforts, not the least of which is being switched in the face by the tail of the horse in front. When dismounted in this kind of country, one has to give the horse in front plenty of room. Before reaching the Snaring we travelled through a few miles of growing timber in which we found ancient Indian camps and cuttings. Perhaps, many years ago, this may have been one of the native thoroughfares between the Smoky and the Athabaska.

It had been sultry for several days, and Idaleen Camp did not prove to be very comfortable. We were plagued with mosquitoes, and the horses with flies, throughout the earlier part of the night, until a welcome storm drove both pests away. When I opened my pack in making camp at Idaleen, I learned another bit of trail wisdom. 'if you must use tooth-paste and shaving soap, don't take them in tubes'. The rope had evidently been pulled over the middle of my tube of tooth-paste, with disastrous results, brush and comb, tobacco pouch and stationery were plastered with it, as well as my scanty supply of clean handkerchiefs. Finding an inscription on a tree, left by the only party that had been into this part of the mountains before us, we added our own. "A party of eight horses, led by Robert the Devil, also

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camped here." If records are to be left of such journeys, why should not those be remembered who do most of the hard work?

In the evening, in the open tent, with everything snug for the night, and a camp-fire burning cheerily before us, we made ourselves as comfortable as the mosquitoes would permit, and the warden, being once more in a remniscent mood, spun some of his yarns. Meanwhile, Robert stood in the smoke of the fire, contemplating the party with a supercilious air of detachment, which did not blind us to the fact that he still had room for a stray crust or a pinch of salt. And Robert generally managed to get what he wanted. His plans for circumventing flies were many and ingenious. One characteristic method was to straddle a thick-set bush, which kept them off that part of his anatomy which he could not reach with his tail.

"You'll remember," said the Warden, turning to me, "that the monuments erected by the Inter-Provincial Boundary Survey at the summit of Athabaska Pass and along the divide are made of concrete with a metal cap and are painted a vivid red. As they are located at high levels, it was quite a job getting the cement up to the site. One of these monuments stands near the shore of the Committee's Punch-Bowl."

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"Yes," I said. "I remember sitting on top of it with one leg in Alberta and the other in British Columbia."

"Well," continued the Warden, "the surveyor and his assistant left their camp the morning after that monument was completed, to take some photographs, and incidentally to inspect the monument. Their camp had been some little way down the Alberta side, and when they had climbed up to the summit they saw a grizzly coming over the skyline from British Columbia, evidently on a tour of inspection of his own. As they were unarmed, and, in any event, had no desire to interfere with the bear, or have him interfere with them, they took shelter behind a big boulder and awaited developments.

"The grizzly seemed to be decidedly interested in the monument and must have wondered how it got there. He walked around it several times, got up on his hind legs and had a good look at it, then gave it a hearty smack. As nothing happened, he got right down to business, put all four legs around it and started a wrestling match. As the paint was not quite dry, his paws were soon daubed with red lead, which he tried to lick off, getting it all over his face and tongue. Evidently, he did not like the taste of it, for he started to fight the monument in earnest. He tugged and pulled at it with increasing rage, but the monument, of course, did not

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budge Suddenly, the old boy seemed to realize that it was too much even for his tremendous strength. He backed away, had a last good look at it, and then, with a somewhat sheepish air, retreated into British Columbia. The surveyor wondered if Mrs. Grizzly were anywhere within view, and if so, how he explained to her his failure to down this new thing that wouldn't fight back and yet couldn't be conquered."

There was, as the story books say, silence for a space, while we all chewed the cud of reflection. There was no comment on the Warden's latest bear-story, which, after all, was not so improbable as some of the others that had been heard around the camp-fire. Apparently, no more bear-stories were forthcoming, but the Warden's nimble mind had gone back to his experiences in Alaska and the Yukon.

"Did I tell you?" he said, "about the crooked judge and the shyster lawyers?"

We reminded him that he had had a good deal to say about crooked lawyers but had not introduced us to his crooked judge.

"Well," said he, "in this case they were all crooked, judge and lawyers,—working together in a dirty attempt to cheat a group of old-timers out of their claims. It was the usual scheme. A bunch of gunmen were sent out to jump the claims—we didn't call them gunmen

in those days but I suppose that is what they would be called to-day. These particular old-timers were very hard-boiled, they had some cash in the bank, and they were not sitting down under that sort of thing. They sent out and engaged a clever lawyer from Seattle. The opposition, however, got word of it and found means of preventing the lawyer from arriving on time for the trial; the judge promptly dismissed the case. Not to be beaten, the miners sent a couple of men all the way to Washington to see Roosevelt. The President was impressed with their honesty and courage, had their story thoroughly investigated, and, as a result, the dishonest judge and lawyers were turned out of Alaska, neck and crop."

"Serve them darn well right!" said Bill.

"Yes," said the Warden, "but it was only very occasionally that the shyster lawyers got what was coming to them. As a rule, they flourished like the proverbial green bay-tree, went outside, and no doubt became pillars of society in some American town."

The Warden got up and fussed about the fire until he had got it to his taste, then sat down again and filled his pipe.

"Odd," he remarked, "what queer streaks of luck there were in the gold camps! I remember one man, his name has slipped me for the moment, but it doesn't

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matter,—who had been a bar-keeper at Skagway, and picked up a claim on one of the creeks in the usual way. The previous owner had been broke, and had traded it for a couple of bottles of whiskey. It turned out to be a particularly rich claim and the ex-bar-keeper cleaned up nearly a million. With all that wealth he didn't feel that he had elbow-room in the north, so he went down to California and, without much difficulty, blew it all in. When it was all gone, he worked his way back to Alaska and struck gold a second time on another creek, to the tune of several hundred thousand dollars. Again, he went out to California and blew it in in the same way but, this time, kept enough to pay his passage back. A third time he found gold, and most of it went in riotous living in San Francisco. Finally, he found himself reduced to a beggarly ten thousand dollars. He was wandering about one day, wondering how he could get rid of it, when a complete stranger came up to him and suggested that they have a drink. That was something he was always ready for, so they adjourned to the nearest bar-room, where the stranger told a long story about an oil prospect in which he was interested. It appeared that he had gone down so far and then had exhausted his funds. He had every confidence that the oil was there, and if he could only find somebody to go in with him, they would both be rich men. It was a

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very familiar story, even then, and most of us would have turned it down with a superior smile, and quite properly too. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred that sort of thing is the most transparent kind of a flim-flam game. However, our friend had confidence in his luck, and not without reason, as it had never yet deserted him. He decided to stake his last dollar on the venture, and when he mentioned the size of his roll, it appeared that that was just the amount the stranger needed. That, you would think, was all that was needed to label the story as a confidence game. Listen to the sequel, though! The two of them went into partnership, went on with the boring, and it proved to be one of the most spectacular gushers in the history of Californian oil."

"Believe it or not?" said Bill



.1 Road for lunch

CHAPTER IX.

THE DIMINISHING HERD



SLOWLY, the pack-train wound its way snake-wise around the shores of an emerald lake and up the last long slope to the mountain pass. On one side rose a sheer wall of sombre rock, surmounted by an ice-clad peak glittering in the September sun, on the other was a more gradual ascent to the opposite summit, rising in gigantic steps to the line of perpetual snow.

My friend Bill, leading the string on Black Prince, turned in his saddle and pointed upward. Following the line of his finger, I saw a number of graceful figures moving slowly along the edge of a high shelf, led by a big bull with magnificent antlers. To my unspoken question, he called back "Carbou!" So far, they seemed to be unconscious of our presence, but a sudden shift in the wind sent up to them the dreaded human scent, and they were off at a gallop toward the pass. For a moment or two, they appeared in sharp outline

on the sky-line, then dropped out of sight down the other side.

As we climbed upwards, I caught sight of a single caribou standing in a patch of snow near the summit of the pass; it was evidently a young bull. He glanced our way, but turned about as if we offered nothing of interest. The wind had again shifted and was now blowing down from the pass. As we drew nearer, the bull decided that we might be worth investigating and moved sedately down the hill towards us. He stood and looked us over, and decided that we were probably harmless but as he had seen enough of us, he turned about and trotted leisurely up to the summit. There he stood on the sky-line and watched us for a moment, then he, too, disappeared. When we came to the top, he was far down the other slope. He must have put on steam when he started downhill.

We came down from Maynard Pass by a very steep game-trail, and as I happened to be at the end of the procession and the trail was exceedingly dusty, I swallowed my peck before we got to the bottom. The trail ran between two pretty little pools which bear the rather obvious name of Twin Lakes. Another mile or two brought us to the West Fork of the South Branch of the Snake Indian, not so very far as the crow flies from our camp of a week before at Blue Creek cabin.

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We pitched the tent on a beautiful little meadow beside the river, made everything snug, washed some of the day's accumulation of dust off our bodies, and thoroughly enjoyed the evening meal. We called this Arcadian Camp, to distinguish it from some others. A steady breeze from the mountains kept the mosquitoes in reasonable subjection.

That evening, the talk around the camp-fire drifted to caribou.

"Bill," I said, "are caribou more difficult to approach than deer?"

"Oh, yes," he replied. "But if you go about it the right way and take your time, it's possible, even in the open, to get near enough to shoot them, not only with a rifle but with a camera. The first rule, of course, is to keep to leeward so that they will not get your scent. When caribou get a strange scent it means danger, and if it's man's scent, they beat it as hard as they can go. Some people think they run because they see the hunter, but that's not the reason. Caribou can see perhaps four hundred or five hundred yards, but they cannot distinguish one thing from another at anything like that distance and anyway, the warning of danger comes to them through their sense of smell, not through their eyes. You have to be patient and wary. If you approach them too fast, they are apt to start angling across

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your front at a distance until they get your scent, then off they go; but by moving very slowly, stopping now and then, and zig-zagging when you see them becoming nervous, you can get close to them in time, even though half the herd may be watching you. I have stalked caribou in this way in the open, until I was not more than thirty yards from the herd. About that time, one of them, usually a cow, will angle past you far enough to get your scent, and then she will run back among the herd and start them milling round in a circle, gradually she will lead them to where they will pick up your scent, and then they are off like the wind."

"I've been told," I said, "that there are at least four varieties of the caribou in Canada, or rather the fourth belongs to Newfoundland. The other three are the Barren Ground caribou, which is the smallest, then the woods caribou, and the big fellow we have here in the mountains."

"I think that's about right," said Bill. "These big black fellows in the Rockies are the finest-looking of the lot, but they're few and far between compared to the Barren Grounds caribou. There are only a few thousands altogether in the mountains, but up north the herds run up into the millions. I was on the Arctic coast last year, and had the good luck to see one of the big herds come up from their winter quarters down where the

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Barren Grounds meet the timber country. A curious thing is that they didn't cross over the sea-ice to the Arctic Islands as they used to do. There's a queer reason for that, but I'll tell you about it later.

"Well, I was standing on the top of a bluff, where one of the Arctic rivers run down to the sea. It was spring, or the beginning of spring, up in that Eskimo country. You could feel it in the air, though the country didn't look like spring. The whole place was sparkling-white, land and sea, except for a little group of buildings about a mile away, with the flag of the Hudson's Bay Company flying over them. I had climbed up on this bluff to have a look around, and was wondering where you could find another place so sound asleep in the middle of the day. You might think sometimes it was pretty quiet here in the mountains, particularly up on one of the high passes, but it's a not compared to the Arctic. There wasn't a living thing moving anywhere in that big landscape, and there wasn't a solitary sound. I could pretty near hear my own heart beating and I began to feel kind of lonesome. Wouldn't have minded seeing even a porcupine, only there ain't any in that country.

"What happened then was so dam' queer, it made me think for a while I must be dreaming. I'd turned round to have a look inland, up the river that ran down

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here through a kind of gorge. But of course, the river wasn't actually running yet. It was frozen solid from bank to bank. Well, I heard a noise behind me like distant thunder, getting louder every moment. I turned quick, and down below, round the base of the hill, trotted a band of caribou, about fifty of them, then another band of fifty, then a bigger lot, perhaps a hundred or so. These must have been kind of advance guards, for after them came a solid mass of caribou. I watched them until I began to feel dizzy. They just streamed round the point until the flat was covered with them, and hundreds were crowded out on to the sea-ice. And still they came, thousands and tens of thousands of them, so close together that you could have travelled over their backs from the hillside to the sea, but God help you if you got down under those thousands of hoofs!

"I expected them to move out over the sea-ice to cross the straits, but they seemed all worked up over something and turned up through the river gorge. In a few minutes, the gorge was packed with them, packed so solid that hundreds surged up over the ridges on either side, for all the world like a river overflowing its banks, only running upstream. You can believe me, it was a strange sight, that wave of animals sweeping continually round the point, out over the shore and the sea-ice, and then up the river; and the strangest part

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was the contrast to the lifelessness of the place a few minutes before. It was as if some one had waved a magician's rod and brought the Arctic out of its long winter's sleep. There seemed to be no end to that herd. You'd think all the caribou in the world must be trotting round the end of the point

"I stood and watched that big natural movie for about half an hour, until my legs began to get wobbly. Then I sat down and watched. Then I turned my back and smoked a pipe. When I looked around, the same army of caribou was moving round me in the same merry-go-round. I smoked another pipe, then had another look. Same old show. It began to get monotonous, and I began to realize that I was sort of up a tree. I was stranded on top of a point, with an unclimbable cliff behind me and a sea of caribou everywhere else. Made me think of the old school definition of a peninsula, a piece of land almost completely surrounded by caribou. Well it was getting beyond a joke. If this spring migration of the caribou went on much longer, I'd starve to death. As a matter of fact, that dam' herd kept me marooned on the top of the bluff for eight solid hours. I never felt more thankful than when the solid ranks began to break up into smaller bands, and the last stragglers had passed the point. It was then about sundown and the caribou army camped where they were, on the

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shore and the sea-ice and for miles up the river. Luckily for me, they all got past the point before dark, or I would have had to make a night of it up on that Arctic bluff, and mightn't have been here to tell the tale."

"That must have been quite a herd," said the Warden.

"As near as I could figure," said Bill, "there must have been about a quarter of a million caribou in the herd. I was saying that the herd didn't cross over to the Arctic Islands, as they used to do, and seemed all worked up over something. That night, one of the Canadian Government officers, who had just crossed over from Victoria Land, and who had been making a study of the ways of the caribou, told me all about it. Seems it's this way: For thousands of years the caribou have been wintering on the southern edge of the Barren Grounds—"

"Stefansson." I interrupted, "says they should be called the Arctic Prairies; that to call them 'barren' is a libel."

"Maybe so," said Bill. "They looked barren enough to me, but that might have been because of the lack of trees. However, as I was saying, the caribou used to winter on the edge of the timber; then, in the spring, the cows and young caribou would trek north in immense herds, up through the Barren Grounds, or anything else you like to call them, to the Arctic coast, over the sea-

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ice to Victoria Land or King William Land, or one or another of the great Arctic Islands. There, they would spend the short summer, and there the young would be born. About the beginning of October, the cows and fawns would begin to move slowly south to the coast, and in November, when the straits had frozen, would cross to the mainland.

"Meanwhile, the bulls had followed them north through the Barren Grounds, but, instead of crossing over to the Arctic Islands, they would spend the summer on the northern slopes of the range of mountains that runs parallel with the Arctic coast. In July and August, when the flies were very bad, they generally made their way down to the coast. In November, the caribou family would be reunited and would move in an immense herd south over the Barren Grounds to their winter quarters on the edge of the timber country.

"Well, that's what the big annual migration used to be and it worked out well for the caribou, because the cows and youngsters were comparatively safe from their enemies on the Arctic Islands. There weren't many wolves there and the few caribou killed by the Eskimo did not make any particular impression on the herd. But now that the migration doesn't go farther north than the coast of the mainland, it's bad for the caribou and it's very bad for the Eskimo.

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"What stopped the caribou from crossing over to the Arctic Islands?" I asked

"I was just coming to that," replied Bill. "This Government chap had gone into the matter pretty carefully because the people at Ottawa were getting anxious about the situation. You see, the caribou means a great deal to the Eskimo. It isn't easy for us white people, particularly those who live in the big modern cities with their wonderful organization for feeding and clothing and housing folks,—to realize how very important the caribou is to the native of the Arctic. It provides them with food and clothing. And the man who lacks food and clothing dies quick in the far north. The skins make tents for his summer home. The tanned hide is cut into straps and lines. He fashions tools and weapons from the bones and antlers. The sinews supply cord and thread, and even ornaments are made from the teeth and toes. The Eskimo has never learned, like the Laplander, to domesticate the caribou, or he would also get milk from the cows and use them instead of dogs to drive his sled. You can see that if you wipe out the caribou, you pretty near wipe out the Eskimo, and they say there is real danger of the caribou becoming as near extinct as the buffalo was a few years ago. I remember my old dad telling me of seeing herds of buffalo so immense that the prairie was crawling with them as

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far as he could see. That was back in the fifties. And in a few years there was nothing left of them but piles of bones. The white man wiped out the buffalo, and then had to turn around and feed the starving Indian. It appears that it's the white man's fault, too, that the caribou is going the same way as the buffalo."

"You didn't seem to find the caribou anything like extinct," I remarked.

"Sure," said Bill, "there're still lots of them left, but, all the same, men that have studied the matter say they're going mighty fast. Thompson Seton, who has been all over the North Country, estimated there was thirty million Barren Ground caribou in 1906. To-day, they say there isn't a tenth of that number left, and the damage has all been done in the last few years. As I understand it, the trouble started about 1915 or 1916, when the Hudson's Bay Company and other fur-traders began building posts along the Arctic coast. You'd be surprised how many there are now between the mouth of the Mackenzie and Adelaide Peninsula. The H B C. has a couple of steamers on the Arctic coast supplying their posts, and there are lots of gas-schooners trading up and down the coast, some of them owned and run by Eskimo. Oh, I tell you, the Arctic coast is civilized now! In fact, the caribou find it a bit too civilized.

"Unfortunately, the trading posts were built at the

very points on the Arctic coast where the caribou had been accustomed to cross the straits. That, of course, was natural enough—the caribou brought the Eskimo and the Eskimo brought the traders. But it was the beginning of the end, so far as the spring migration was concerned. And curiously enough, it wasn't the presence of white men, or the building of their trading posts, that did the mischief, it wasn't even the smoke from their chimneys, so long as it was only wood-smoke. The trouble came when the traders began to use coal and oil for fuel. The caribou were naturally afraid of wood-smoke, which they associated with fire in the timber country; but they were simply terrified when they got the pungent smell of coal- or oil-smoke. They did not know what it was, or what it might mean, and they got into a panic and beat it away from that particular neighbourhood, and never came back. That was what happened at Bernard Harbour, at the western point of Coronation Gulf. When they began to burn soft coal at the post, the migration faded away, but caribou crossed in enormous numbers at the mouth of the Coppermine. A post was built there, and for a while they burned wood, but it hadn't any particular effect on the trek across the straits. Then they began to use coal and crude oil and the migration stopped. Same thing happened at Tree River, farther east, and at Kent Peninsula. The result

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was that when the caribou stopped crossing over to Victoria Land, the Eskimo there were threatened with starvation and had to move over to the mainland. Same thing happened farther east, when the Hudson's Bay Company built a post on Adelaide Peninsula. That was in 1923. Next year, the caribou would not cross to King William Land, and the natives had to desert the island in a body. That was the sort of thing I happened to see, as I was telling you. The caribou herd came down to the Arctic coast, intending to cross the straits. When they got a whiff of coal-smoke from the trading post, they turned along the coast and beat it up the river. Funny thing to make so much fuss about a little smoke!

'Well, what happens now is that the herds come down to the coast in the spring, then turn east or west, mostly east, on the mainland, and their young are born in a country that is alive with their enemies, Indian hunters on the south, Eskimo hunters on the north, both armed with high powered rifles, and wolves by the thousand. They say that even birds of prey take an enormous toll of the new-born fawns. No wonder the caribou is diminishing. It looks, in fact, as if it might disappear altogether unless something is done to give it a fighting chance. The Government has made a sanctuary for the musk ox, east of Great Slave Lake. That wouldn't

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help the Barren Grounds caribou, because you couldn't tie it down to a small area. I suppose what is needed is to move the trading posts from the points where the caribou has been accustomed to cross over to the Arctic Islands, and teach the natives to kill only what animals they need for food and clothing. The fact is, the whole situation is pretty hard on the caribou. In the old days, neither Eskimo nor Indian could follow them out into the Barren Grounds in winter, because of the lack of fuel. Now, all they have to do is to take with them a primus stove with a supply of coal-oil, and they can stay out on the Barrens for a couple of months if necessary, and live on caribou all the time. There doesn't seem to be any place left for the caribou where they won't be harried by their enemies, two-footed or four-footed. It looks like 'exit the Barren Grounds caribou', doesn't it? Fortunately, the mountain caribou is safe. I'd be sorry to see it go."

"Yes," said the Warden, as he built up the fire for the night, "our caribou isn't in any danger of being wiped out. Wolves don't have much chance to get at it, and the big-game hunters outside the Parks are interested only in choice heads, and are held in close check by the game laws. They talk of guides winking at hunters breaking the game laws. Don't you believe it! They can't

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afford to. They're more interested than any one else in preserving big game. It's their bread and butter."

CHAPTER X.

THE SKYLINE TRAIL



LEAVING Idaleen Pass we packed with unusual care as the route ahead of us was trailless and promised to be very difficult. We followed the Snaring for awhile, and then turned up toward Thornton Pass, cutting our way as we went. A mountain creek came down steeply from the pass, part of the way through a deep gorge. We tried to find a way up the right bank, but in the end ran into an impassable wall of rock and had to turn back. It was then too late to attempt anything further, so we camped on the only comparatively level spot we could find.

In the morning, we scrambled down the creek to a point where we could cross, then started up the other side. It was a very stiff climb, with almost continuous cutting, and the horses liked it so little that they tried more than once to bolt back down the new trail, but we finally reached the summit without misadventure, hot and tired but triumphant. Ours was the first outfit that had been taken up over Thornton Pass.



Circus Valley, Jasper National Park

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The view from Thornton Pass was memorable. Looking back, the valley of the Snaring was spread out below, with the Colonel and several other splendid peaks in the distance. Before us stretched the beautiful valley of Dominion Creek. When we finally got down to it we named it "Consolation Valley". Great rocky walls rose on either side, with park like groves of spruce on their lower slopes, and through the wide valley meandered the silver ribbon of the stream. An outstanding peak on the right had from the pass the appearance of a gigantic gridiron. A graceful waterfall fell through spruce from a high green bench on the left, where caribou were feeding. As we made our way down from the pass, we rode through a town of marmots, scores of them popping up on either side. We camped on the only dry spot we could find on the banks of the creek, facing Mount Bridgeland, which from this point of view, deserves to be called "The Throne". A hanging glacier forms the seat, two great bastions springing up, one on either side, towards the towering peak. Down one of them falls a lace-like waterfall.

I remarked to Bill that I had been rather disappointed in the number of big game that we had seen in the course of our journey, particularly mountain sheep and goats. He replied that this was not the time of the year to come across them in any numbers down in the

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valleys. In the spring, they follow the young grass up from the valleys to the high pastures above timber-line, and remain there until the autumn, when they come down again to winter in the timber. Winter, he said, was a hard season for the deer, which were harried continually by the wolves. Even the coyotes would drive them into deep snow, where the deer got bogged while the coyotes would run along the top of the crust to pull them down when exhausted. The lynx attacked a deer in the same manner.

To avoid an extremely tiresome journey through the almost continuous muskeg of Dominion Creek, we climbed to the top of a high table-land that divides that stream from the Miette. It was a long zig-zag climb to the top, but we were repaid with a wonderful panorama, from Mount Robson around to Fitzwilliam and the Colin range, and back to Mount Alberta, and the peaks of British Columbia. Along this skyline we travelled for several hours, thoroughly enjoying the novelty of open and firm ground over which we could even gallop if we wished. The sensation was as if one were travelling on the top of the world; it was peculiarly enjoyable after being cooped up in narrow valleys for some time and travelling over ground that would only admit of a walking pace and sometimes an extremely slow walk. It was particularly comforting to look down into the deep

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valley of Dominion Creek and think of the tiresome and mosquito-infested route from which we had escaped

The skyline trail was, with its spaciousness and its sense of far horizons, and the impression it gave one of looking down upon the world the nearest approach to an air-journey that could be imagined. I have never had an opportunity of seeing this part of the Rockies from an aeroplane, but spent the better part of a day flying over the southern Canadian Rockies, going in from High River over the Prince of Wales' ranch and travelling south through the heart of the mountains into Montana. We passed so close to the Crow's Nest that we could almost have tossed a pebble on to its summit, and we could see the tiny threads of the railway winding up to it, we flew low over Waterton Park to have a look at the lakes, then up over the boundary peaks, and down over St. Mary Lakes in Glacier Park. The return journey was over the foothills and the prairie, the latter looking like a gigantic checker-board. We flew over the Mormon settlement in southern Alberta and looked down upon the wonderful marble temple in Cardston. In its drab surroundings, it suggests one of those stories from *The Arabian Nights* in which a magician transports the king's palace into the heart of a humble village.

It was unusually interesting to see some of the familiar peaks of the Rockies from an entirely new angle.

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but I think what impressed me most was the extraordinary roughness of the journey. While we flew over the prairie the going was as smooth as one could desire, that velvety smoothness that is achieved only in an aeroplane travelling over level country, far transcending the motion of the most luxurious automobile; but as soon as the machine got over the mountains there was a radical and disagreeable change. Whatever the reason may have been, rapidly changing elevations, air currents whirling around the peaks, or what not, our plane rocked and rolled like a skiff in a heavy surf. One had to be a pretty good sailor to stand the strain.

Flying in the Jasper Park country would be even more interesting than over the southern Canadian Rockies, not only because of the spectacular nature of the scenery but also because so much of it is practically unexplored. The practical advantages of this means of transport have been very strikingly illustrated in connection with the topographical surveys. Normally, a reconnaissance in the mountains, particularly in parts of them that as yet have no trails, is a very slow and tiresome matter, involving weeks of labour. With an aeroplane, the same ground can be covered in a very few hours, and photographs obtained from the air that enormously simplify the work of the surveyor.

The story of a flight in 1925, from Vancouver up the

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coast to Wrangel and then inland by way of the Stikine River to Dease Lake and the Liard, illustrates the amazing possibilities of the aeroplane in reaching in a very short time parts of the country that otherwise would be almost inaccessible. The purpose of the trip was to take a party of prospectors in to a district that could not have been reached by any other available means of conveyance in six months of the hardest kind of travel. There were six men in the machine including the pilot.

As the flying-boat touched the water in Wrangel harbor, a launch rushed out to meet them. In its bows stood the United States Customs officer, courteously extending to them a welcome on behalf of his government. A moving-picture man was also picked up here, who was keen to get pictures of the glaciers in the Stikine country; he begged so much that the pilot was prevailed upon to take him aboard, although his presence afterwards proved embarrassing.

Leaving Wrangel, they flew up the valley of the Stikine. The pilot should have landed at the boundary to report to the Canadian Customs officer, but at the height he was travelling he could not see the post and light-heartedly decided that he would report by letter from Telegraph Creek. Very early on the morning after his arrival there, he was rudely disillusioned. He was awakened at five in the morning by the Customs

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officer in person, who had followed him up the river and was in a towering passion. He demanded an immediate explanation of the pilot's conduct in not reporting at the boundary, and particularly in bringing in an alien (the movie man) without proper authority. As the explanation did not prove to be convincing, he threatened to seize the flying-boat. He cooled off, however, after a time. Perhaps it occurred to him that it might be easier to seize a flying-machine than to know what to do with it afterwards. At any rate, after reading the guilty man a lecture, he departed for his post.

The early part of June was spent very pleasantly in fishing for Dolly Varden trout and salmon in the Stikine, while they waited for word of the breaking up of the ice on Dease Lake. About the middle of the month, they flew seventy miles to the head of the lake, over a country absolutely devoid of landing places for a flying-boat. Theirs was the first machine to cross this height of land, from Pacific waters to those of the Arctic. From Dease Lake they flew ninety miles down Dease River, in fifty minutes—pretty good going, in a country that hitherto had known nothing more speedy than a canoe.

The Indians were immensely impressed with this mysterious thing that came down to them out of the clouds. When it landed they fled to the woods, and after it was anchored near shore, they crept down slowly



Youquim Valley, The Kamouris

to the water's edge and stared at it for hours. When it moved slightly in the wind, they would all get up from where they were sitting and move back a few feet, gradually creeping forward until it moved again. They made noises to imitate the roar of the motor, and moved their hands to show how the machine turned and banked in the air. "Fly like a bird," they said, "and come down like a goose." And this was, to them, the conclusion of the whole matter: "White man be crazy."

From the Dease River they flew down to the Liard. At French Creek, a white man, who had been trapping in the country for fifteen years, heard the noise of the motor and thought that a big boat must be coming down stream. He walked over to the river-bank, but could not see any sign of a steamer. The sound, becoming louder and louder, appeared to be coming from directly under his feet. He thought the boat must be hidden behind the bush-covered bank. When he climbed down to investigate, a huge shadow shot by him. He looked up and saw the aeroplane about to land. "Great God!" said he. "What next?"

As the machine approached Fort Liard, everyone in the vicinity rushed down to the river to solve the problem of the big noise. No one knew that the aeroplane was coming and no one there had ever before seen one. Finally, someone spotted the machine up among the

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clouds. As it came nearer and seemed to be passing overhead, the local agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, thinking the pilot had not seen the post, told the Indians to fire their guns, not realizing that the sound of rifle shots would make no impression against the roar of an aeroplane engine. The natives in their enthusiasm aimed at the machine. A few hours after landing, the pilot noticed water in the hull of the boat and, on investigation, found a miniature fountain shooting up through the bottom. One of the stray bullets had hit the hull, missing the gas tank by inches.

Nor did the interest of the natives end there. One of them, not having a canoe, built himself a raft and started off for Fort Nelson, 450 miles down-stream, to tell the Big Chief about the crazy white man and his big bird. The pilot took two other Indians in the machine from Fort Liard to their village. When they landed they were so completely dazed that they refused at first to admit that this was their own village. Can you blame them? They knew that it took five days and nights of hard travel to go that distance on foot—and only forty-five minutes before they had been at Fort Liard!

With Liard as headquarters, prospecting was carried on systematically within a radius of 250 miles. In one day the pilot took seven men, with supplies for a month, including tents and mining equipment, 200 miles across

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country unmarked by trails or any other vestige of human habitation. The first men landed had breakfast and were at work a couple of miles up the creek at eight-thirty in the morning. The work was completed and the entire party back in Fort Liard by nightfall. By any other means of travel, such an operation could not have been carried out in less than twelve months.

Before leaving the Liard, the pilot visited the famous Tropical Valley, which lies just north of the river, near Devil's Canyon. It hardly came up to expectations. The size and rankness of the vegetation were evidently caused by the vapour of numerous hot springs in the neighbourhood. A lone prospector had lived there for some time, and had left behind him vegetables, flowers and fruits growing in luxuriant profusion. Rather an anticlimax when one remembers the glowing romantic tales that have been told about this out-of-the-way valley.

To return for a moment to the skyline trail, we wormed our way down from it through weary miles of burnt timber to the banks of the Miette River. Blaze managed to throw his pack, fortunately over his head, otherwise he would probably have kicked its contents all over the landscape. While the other two were getting the pack back on his back, I found among the burnt timber the largest and most delicious wild strawberries I had ever come across.

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We were cutting our way through a particularly heavy bit of jungle when suddenly, we heard the whistle of a locomotive, far down in the valley of the Miette. Its startling impact made one realize how brief a separation from all the sights and sounds of civilization is sufficient to make them seem, for a moment, utterly unfamiliar. Railways and telegraphs and the postal service, newspapers and magazines and the radio, motion pictures and the phonograph, automobiles and trams, Turkish baths and electric light and the telephone, and a thousand and one other incidents of modern life, have become so familiar that we take them all for granted. And yet, one goes out on the trail for a few days or a few weeks, leaving them all behind, and not merely never misses them but forgets their very existence. I think perhaps the newspaper habit is as definite an illustration as one could find of this artificial burden that we all carry so uncomplainingly. Most of us spend—I will not say waste—at least an hour every day reading the newspapers. We wander away from civilization for several weeks, leaving newspapers and other encumbrances behind, and when we return are mildly surprised to find that the news we have failed to read boils down to almost nothing. And yet as the vast majority of us must spend our lives not in the wilderness but in modern cities, it would be absurd to suggest that we would be better off

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without these marvellous inventions. Perhaps the truth is that, while most of us thoroughly enjoy the opportunity of shaking off for a limited period the trammels of civilization, we return with renewed zest to the comforts and conveniences of modern life.

At last, we got clear of the timber, scrambled down the final slope, picked our way through a mass of huge boulders to the river bench, and followed the trail down the Miette to Dominion Prairie, where we camped. Part of the way, we travelled over the old Grand Trunk Pacific right-of-way. It was odd to find fair-sized trees growing between the ties. Time flies and the Grand Trunk Pacific, which once seemed a new and wonderful undertaking, is definitely a thing of the past. The rails had been taken up some years ago, and this part of the transcontinental route of the Canadian National Railways follows the line of the old Canadian Northern, on the other side of the river.

The junction of the Miette with the Athabaska, a few miles below our camp at Dominion Prairie, marks the point where two once famous thoroughfares of the fur trade met. The story of the Athabaska Pass route has already been told in *On the Old Athabaska Trail*. A few words may be said here about the Yellowhead Pass route, in its day as much travelled as its earlier rival. The earlier name, of which this is a translation, was

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Tête Jaune, and is supposed to have been derived from some yellow-headed trapper who made this neighbourhood his headquarters in the early days. It was also known for a time as Leather Pass, because the fur-traders used this route to carry buffalo-hides from the prairie country to their posts west of the mountains, where they were unobtainable.

Probably the best-known of the travellers who used this route were Lord Milton and Dr Cheadle, Sandford Fleming, and the overland parties on their way to the Caribou gold-fields. The first-named went through the pass in 1863, the overlanders a year or two earlier, and Fleming in 1872. The pass had been used by fur-traders for many years before 1800, and the route was familiar ground to the surveyors in later years, first in connection with the Canadian Pacific Railway, and half a century later in connection with the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern.

Milton and Cheadle, in *The North-West Passage by Land*, describe their journey from the Athabaska up the Miette to Tête Jaune Cache and the Fraser. One hears a good deal about the misadventures of that exasperating Irish parson whom they call Mr O'B. He had much difficulty in fording the Miette.

"Clutching the mane with both hands, he did not attempt to guide his horse, but employed all his powers

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in sticking to the saddle, and exhorting his companions, "Steady, my lord, please, or I shall be swept off. Do speak to Mrs. Assiniboine [the Indian guide's wife]; she's leading us to destruction; what a reckless woman! Mrs. Assiniboine! Mrs. Assiniboine! I'm going! I'm going! Narrow escape, that, my lord! very narrow escape, indeed Doctor! We can't expect to be so lucky every time, you know." And the moment he gained the shore, he scrambled off and left his horse to its own devices."

The extraordinary lowness of the pass is brought out in the narrative.

"In the course of our morning's journey," they say, "we were surprised by coming upon a stream flowing to the westward. We had unconsciously passed the height of land and gained the water-shed of the Pacific. The ascent had been so gradual and imperceptible that, until we had the evidence of the water-flow, we had no suspicion that we were even near the dividing ridge."

They camped on the shores of Yellowhead Lake, then as now well stocked with trout, and named two neighbouring peaks Mount Fitzwilliam and Mount Bingley. The following day, they struck the Fraser River and followed it down to Moose Lake. In fording Moose Creek, Mr. O'B. had another hair's-breadth escape. The trail along the bank of the Fraser at one point was so narrow and dangerous that they called it Mahomet's Bridge.

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The forks of the Fraser, which they reached the next morning, was the original Tête Jaune Cache.

"The situation is grand and striking beyond description. At the bottom of a narrow rocky gorge, whose sides were clothed with dark pines, or, higher still, with light green shrubs, the boiling, impetuous Fraser dashed along. On every side the snowy heads of mighty hills crowded around, whilst, immediately behind us, a giant among giants, and immeasurably supreme, rose Robson's Peak. This magnificent mountain is of conical form, glacier-clothed, and rugged. When we first caught sight of it, a shroud of mist partially enveloped the summit, but this presently rolled away, and we saw its upper portion dimmed by a necklace of light feathery clouds, beyond which its pointed apex of ice, glittering in the morning sun, shot up far into the blue heaven above."

In crossing the Fraser, they lost one of their horses, which proved to be a double misfortune, as in his pack were stored their entire remaining supply of tea, salt and tobacco, as well as all the clothing except what they carried on their backs, the matches and ammunition, and most of their papers and valuables. Fortunately, the pemmican and flour were packed on another animal. "What grieves me," said Mr O'B., "is the loss of your tobacco, it's a very serious thing to me as well as to you, for, do you know, my own was just finished, and I

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was on the very point of asking you to lend me some till we get through."

Grant's *Ocean to Ocean* tells the story of Sandford Fleming's overland journey of 1872. The valley of the Miette, or the Caledonian Valley, as Dr. Hector had named it, gave Fleming's party as unfriendly a reception as Milton and Chuzzlewit had experienced a decade before. The river, says Dr. Grant, "rushes down a narrow valley fed at every corner by foaming fells from the hillsides, and by several large tributaries. A short way up from its mouth it becomes simply a series of rapids or mad currents, hurling along boulders, trees, and débris of all kinds."

They had not got far up the Miette when they met one of the survey parties under Moberly, who sent some of his men with axes to cut a trail.

"It certainly needed all the improvement it got," says Grant. "Swamps covered with an underbrush of scrub birch, and tough willows eight to ten feet high, that slapped our faces and defiled our clothing with foul-smelling marsh mud, had to be floundered through. Alternating with these, intervened the face of the precipice, the rocky bed and sides of the river, or fallen timber, stumps, and blackened poles, to climb, to scramble over, or to dodge."

Supper, prepared by Moberly's Indian cook, was

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doubly welcome after a strenuous day on the Miette. If Grant is to be believed, this man bore no sort of resemblance to the Indian cooks most of us have met with in the west. He put before them bread light as Parisian rolls, delicious Java coffee sweetened with sugar from the Sandwich Islands, and crisp bacon.

"All the hardships of the afternoon were forgotten as the aroma of the coffee steamed up our nostrils, and when Tim announced that he had oatmeal enough to make porridge for breakfast, our luck in meeting him was declared to be wonderful, and Caledonian Camp was voted the jolliest of our forty-nine."

Fleming and Grant were both Scotch.

A brief account was given by Sandford Fleming, of the overland expedition to the Caribou gold-fields in 1862, in the *Transactions* of the Royal Society of Canada for 1889, and a fuller narrative by Judge F W Howay, in the same *Transactions* for 1919. The party, consisting of over one hundred and thirty young men, mostly from Ontario, left Fort Garry with nearly one hundred Red River carts drawn by oxen. Think of the indescribable shrieking and snarling and screeching of that endless line of ail-wooden carts! At Edmonton, the carts were abandoned for pack-horses, and the emigrants taught to throw the diamond hitch. Some of the oxen were taken on with them, as food on the hoof.

On their way to the Athabaska, they had to cross the Pembina, which is described as one of the most exciting incidents of the journey

"The water reached to the horses' backs. It was impossible to make a raft and it was too deep for fording. A new plan was evolved; the tents were spread out; the goods placed inside; and then the tents were drawn together like bags. Lines were fastened to the bags, and two men on horseback towed them across while two others waded the ice-cold, shoulder-deep water endeavouring to support them and keep them from upsetting. Other goods were carried across by men on horseback who upheld or tried to uphold them on their heads or shoulders. It was indeed a busy scene in that wild and lonely spot; on the one bank the goods being unpacked and made up for crossing, on the other, many men busy reassembling them into packs and loading the horses; in the centre the river, full of animals and men going and returning loaded and unloaded, here a couple tugging away against the current with their tent boat, while the buckless wights up to their necks in the water held on behind; there a bewildered equestrian making a vain attempt to guide his steed across the stream, while his nervous friend to whom he had given a *deck* passage held him firmly by his arms and put forth many spasmodic efforts which usually only resulted in wetting them both;

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and yonder another bold navigator astride an ox, sometimes in the water and sometimes out of it, boxing the compass in his frantic attempts to induce his bovine steed to shape his course towards the setting sun."

They made their way at length to Jasper House, and up the Athabaska to the Miette. In five hours, it is recorded, they crossed this ice-cold stream seven times. Leaving it at last, they came to a region so encumbered with fallen timber that the expedition was compelled to halt while axe-men hewed out a trail through the jungle. Their rate of travel had been much slower than they had anticipated, and by the time they reached Yellowhead Lake their supply of pemmican was exhausted and their flour perilously low. At Moose Lake they dined on roast skunk and porcupine, both of which they thought delicious. When they arrived at Tête Jaune Cache they were able to get a supply of dried salmon from a party of Shuswap Indians. The expedition divided soon afterwards; part of it went down the Fraser and the rest tried the then unknown route by the North Thompson. Most of them got through, after much hardship, but few ever reached the Caribou gold-fields. Some made their way down to the coast and others got work on the Caribou road.



Amethyst Lake

CHAPTER XI.

SPEAKING OF BEARS



BEARS," said Bill, as he threw another log on the fire "are somethin' like women. They'll run true to form for a time, an' then they'll do something so damn' unexpected it knocks the wind clean out of you. Now, takin' them by and large, grizzlies'll leave you alone if you mind your own business and don't meddle with theirs, an' perticularly, they'll give you a wide berth when you're sittin', like this, round a camp-fire. But, if you bank on that happenin' all the time, you're maybe due for an unpleasant surprise."

He gazed reflectively into the bowl of his ancient pipe, shook out the ashes, and rummaged in the depths of his coat pocket. I waited for a moment, knowing perfectly well that his tobacco-pouch was not there, and that he knew that I knew it was not there. The fact was, he fixed my mixture better than his own. Well, that wouldn't matter except that the supply was running low, and tobacco becomes a precious commodity when

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you are a week's travel by trail from the nearest Hudson's Bay Company's store. If the worst came to the worst, I supposed I could smoke his after mine was gone, anyway, I wouldn't get his story until I'd paid for it. So I tossed the pouch over to him. He filled his pipe with the leisurely care of a man who can act with lightning rapidity when he must but avoids it when it is not necessary. Then he took a few puffs to get it well started, moved back a few inches the reflector in which he was baking to-morrow's bread, and went on with his tale.

"It happened a long time ago, long before my time, when the fur traders used to travel from old Fort Edmonton to Jasper House on the Athabaska, an' up the Whirlpool to the Committee's Punch-bowl, and then down from Athabaska Pass to the big bend of the Columbia. That was about fifty years before Jasper Park was thought of. The Athabaska country was full of big game in those days, but of course it was shyer than it is to-day, though not very much huntin' was done except from Jasper House, the fur brigades havin' no time to waste on game, only when their supplies ran low.

"One of these brigades was travellin' up the Athabaska, on its way to Fort Vancouver near the mouth of the Columbia. They had camped a few miles up the Whirlpool. You know the place. It used to be known in the old days as Campment d'Original, I suppose because

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there were lots of elk there. Very good camping ground, with good feed for the horses, an' mosquitoes and bulldogs no worse than elsewhere. Well, they'd built a big fire, because it was gettin' on to the fall and the nights were cool. Them big peaks on the Whirlpool sure do send down a cold wind about nine o'clock. Traders and voyageurs, they were all sittin' about the fire, waitin' impatiently for a very fine, fat buck that one of the hunters had brought in, and which was roastin' over the fire.

"I guess it made their mouths water, an' evidently it got the goat of a big, half-starved grizzly that had been lurkin' among the pines. He must've been hoverin' about for some time, out o' sight of the camp, drawn by the maddenin' smell of them juicy venison steaks, but afraid of the fire. Finally, hunger got the better of his fear, and he made a dash through the camp, tried to grab a piece of meat from the spit, burned his paw, and then turned in a fury and picked up a big half-breed as if he had been a kid, and ran about fifty yards with him, on his hind legs.

"The grizzly must've been attracted by a bone that Louisson—that was his name—was chewin' the meat off of. Anyway, he dropped the man at the foot of a tree, straddled him, and began in a very leisurely way to pick the bone that he had grabbed out of Louisson's hands.

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"All the time he kept one eye on Louisson and the other on his comrades, who were running about the camp in a panic, not knowin' what to do. One of them finally picked up a gun and was goin' to fire at the bear, but another, who still had some sense, pulled his gun away, reminding him that he'd be more likely to kill Louisson than the grizzly. So long as Louisson kept quiet, the bear paid no heed to him, but when he made an attempt to escape, he pinned him down so heavily that he pretty well drove the wind out of him. After a while, the man, who was growin' desperate, made another attempt. The grizzly grabbed him about the waist and began to give him one of them hugs that most generally end in death.

' Louisson screamed in agony, and his friend Baptiste came running toward him with a gun. 'Fire! fire' Baptiste, if you love me! Fire, for the love of God! At his head! At his head!' Baptiste could not stand such an appeal. It was jetter to take the risk of shootin' Louisson than see him crushed to death. He raised his gun, took careful aim, and hit the bear over the right temple. The grizzly dropped Louisson, and fell on top of him, giving him an ugly scratch across the face with his claws as he fell. Baptiste dashed forward, finished the bear with his hunting-knife, and pulled poor Louisson from under him. He carried the mark of the grizzly for the rest of his



Looking down Lake Ametavak Ramparts, Mos Lake from Mt. Catherine

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life but otherwise was not much the worse for his adventure

Bill carefully banked up the fire so that the heat would be concentrated as much as possible in his reflector, then, absent mindedly, picked up my tobacco-pouch and refilled his pipe

"Louisson," he remarked, "was lucky to get off so easy. Grizzlies generally die slow, an' can kill a man after they've got a mortal wound. One of them killed a horse after three hunters had pumped lead into him. Curly Philips had a narrow escape a couple of years ago. He was taking a party up north of Robson and happened to be out alone one day, lookin' for birds with a twenty-two. Suddenly, he came round a big rock and found himself face to face with a huge grizzly. Curly stood still, thinkin' the bear would beat it, but he was in an ugly mood, an' got up on his hind legs and stood there swaying from side to side, about twenty feet away. If Curly tried to run, the bear would be after him in no time an' he wouldn't have a chance. His little twenty-two didn't seem much better than a pea-shooter against a grizzly, but he thought he might as well try the hundred-to-one chance, which was to get him in the eye. If he could hit him in the exact spot, the bullet would go through to his brain without touchin' the bone. Curly's a good shot and has no nerves. He fired, dropped his

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gun, and beat it down the trail, knowing that the bear would attempt to rush him in any event. After a while, he looked back and saw that he had the landscape to himself. Feelin' pretty sure that he had hit the bull's-eye, he went cautiously back and found the grizzly dead, about ten or twelve feet from where he had stood."

"I'll have to tell that story," I remarked, "to my friend, the United States Minister in Ottawa. He will be interested to know that his namesake is not only a famous guide and mountain-climber, but also a notable big-game hunter."

"Well," said Bill, "you might also tell him this one. There was a trapper who got a good deal closer to a grizzly than he cared for. It was last year, down in the Mahone Lake country. He had had a heavy day, and findin' himself a long way from camp at sundown, decided to stay where he was till morning. The weather was fine, and he could sleep beside the trail comfortably enough. He made a little fire, ate what was left of his grub, smoked a pipe, and lay down on the side of a mossy bank.

"He was very tired and slept later than he had intended. Probably, he wouldn't have waked when he did but for the snappin' of a twig beside him. It was just before dawn, and as his eyes opened he found himself lookin' up into the gaping jaws of a grizzly; he was

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a big fellow anyway, but seemed huge in the dim light. The trapper found himself wonderin' what he could have eaten the day before to give him such a nightmare. Then the suffocatin' smell of the thing that was straddlin' him made him realize that this was worse than a nightmare.

"So far, the bear was merely curious, but the man knew that if he moved suddenly he was done for. Fortunately, he'd kept his gun beside him when he lay down, but the chances of using it were mighty slim. Mr Bear seemed in no hurry to change his position. Apparently, the next move was up to the trapper. It was about as difficult and dangerous a move as you could well imagine. If he got away with it, he might escape with his life, if he failed, he would certainly pass out. However, he must make the attempt. It was that or nothin'. A gambler's throw, with the dice loaded against him.

"Very slowly and cautious-like, he felt for his gun. It was in an awkward position for his purpose and would need a lot of manœuvrin' to get it where he must have it to be any good to him. The great head swung above him, the wicked little eyes watched him all the time, seemingly waitin' only for the excuse of his slightest movement to put an end to the matter. One of the paws was lifted slowly, as though the brain that directed it was debatin' whether or not the moment had come to

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strike, and the man could see out of the corners of his eyes the terrifyin' ivory knuves it was armed with. The thought of what those claws might do to him at any moment was almost too much for his nerves. Sweat blinded his eyes and he was on the point of faintin'. With a big effort he kept his mind on the gun. It must be moved. It must be moved.

"With the greatest caution his fingers closed on the barrel and shd bit by bit up to the stock. He realized, with a sick feelin', that his arm was growin' numb. If he was to act at all, it must be now. Bracin' himself, and grittin' his teeth, he threw the gun up until it touched the bear's head, and pulled both triggers, then flung himself to one side. The grizzly's head was pretty near blown off, the great body came down with smotherin' weight; fortunately, he was clear of the terrible claws. With one last desperate effort he pulled himself clear and rolled over on the trail, more dead than alive. He must've been an awful sight, if anyone had been there to see him. He lay there for some time, not sure yet that he was safe, but too far gone to do anything more. Finally, he pulled himself shakily to his feet, and looked down upon a dead grizzly."

"Well' well!" broke in a derisive voice from the dark background, "you sure are some spinner of yarns; but you're a helluva poor cook!"

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Bill swung round to his neglected reflector, with a muttered oath, and snatched it away from the fire. His bread had reached that doubtful tint which the guilty cook calls "nicely browned," and every one else "badly burned." I started to murmur something about King Alfred, but a glance at Bill's face warned me that this was no time for persiflage. To burn a batch of bread in town may be a suitable subject for merriment, but not in a mountain camp. There was a tense feeling in the air for a time, until Bill had satisfied himself that the damage was more apparent than real. Then he settled back on his log, and I threw him my tobacco-pouch as a sort of peace-offering, with that queer guilty feeling a perfectly innocent onlooker has that he must bring the culprit back to a more equable frame of mind. By the time his pipe was going again, Bill had recovered his composure.

"Huh?" he said, "what do you know about bears?"

The newcomer stretched himself out comfortably on the ground, with his back against a pile of horse-blankets, and spat meditatively into the fire.

"Not much," he replied modestly. "It's been my experience that the more a man thinks he knows about bears, the surer he is to find that he don't know nothin'. One man's bear facts most generally don't jibe with another man's. The only thing I'd care to bank on is

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that it's generally wise not to get into a dispute with a grizzly. If him and me's on the same trail, and he's coming my way, I'm that polite I always get off and let him have it to himself.

"Not like Kootenay Jim, for instance. You remember Jim. He was comin' down the Snake Indian trail one day, an' because his mind was on a bunch of horses that had taken it into their fool heads to beat it up one of the creeks, and he wasn't sure which, he was pretty near on top of a big bear with her two cubs before he came to. As soon as his buckskin saw the grizzly, she rared up and tried to paw the sky, then swung round, and she and Jim went hell-fer leather down the trail. But while she'd been dancing on her hind legs the two cubs had elected to lead the pr'cession, and there they was rolling ahead down the trail like a couple of furry balls.

"Well, that was all right as far as it went, and Jim, who didn't know much about bears, began to think it was a helluva joke for him to be racing a couple of grizzly cubs down to Snake Indian Falls. But just about that time, he happened to look back over his shoulder, and there was that big mother grizzly eatin' up the trail behind him and madder than an avalanche in May. She was foam'in' at the mouth, and also she was makin' better time than his old buckskin. It seemed

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to Jim, sudden like, that that trail was gettin' crowded and that somebody had better get off it to make room for the rest, and he concluded that that somebody must be himself. So he swung off through the trees, and the old girl, after one angry snarl at him as she went past, decided that she had business with the rest of her family who were still tryin' to beat the record for grizzly cubs on a straight trail."

We had made camp early that day, and had had an early supper. It appeared that our guest had missed his, so Bill hospitably got out the beans and bacon, and as we found that our own appetites had revived since the last meal, we kept him company. Finding the bread box beside me, I got out one of the new loaves, cut off the darkest of its outer crust and handed it to the Warden. Without cracking a smile, he carefully buttered it and handed it to our companion, butter side up. Turning it upside down, our guest praised the dull ebony finish Bill had put upon it, and then passed it over his shoulder to the disgruntled little runt known as Robert the Devil, who was noted for never being present when the packs were ready and never absent when food was going around. Robert accepted the gift superciliously, munched it with a sardonic snort, and came back for more.

"That," said Bill, "settles the question. If that bread is good enough for Robert, it's good enough for the rest of you."

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I thought it might be well to change the subject

"Have you ever," I asked, "had a grizzly get into your cabin?"

"Oh, sure!" he replied. "Last spring, one got in while I was down to headquarters. When I opened the cabin door, on my return, I could do nothing but stand there and swear. You never saw such a God-forsaken mess as that cursed four-footed devil had made of my place. He sure did lay himself out to put the cabin on the blink. There wasn't a thing he could reach that he hadn't destroyed. He'd torn my bed to pieces and scattered fragments of the mattress over the floor. He'd pulled down a shelf of books, and spilt a bag of flour over them. Then he had got at the canned stuff. He'd ripped up tin after tin of beans, tomatoes, and jam—eaten what he wanted and smeared the rest all over the surrounding scenery. He'd upset a can of coal-oil and had evidently tried to eat both the blacking and the dubbin. I hope they made him sick. He'd even got at my shaving-oufit, ripped up the tube of shaving-cream, but left the blades severely alone. If ever a bear went out to paint the town red, and succeeded, that bear was it. And he even had the nerve to come back the following night—I suppose, to see if there was anything he'd overlooked. I woke to see the big brute climbing through the window, and gave him the surprise of his



Tongue Valley The Mammoth and Maccumb Creek, Jasper National Park

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life when I batted him on the nose with the flat side of a heavy spade. The last I saw of him he was beating it as hard as he could go down the hillside "

"There ain't nothin' alive, except a wolverine, that'll play rough-house with a man's cabin worse than a grizzly," remarked the visitor. "About the nearest I ever came to passing in my checks was account of one of them big pests. I was waked about daybreak by a noise in the cabin. Hadn't fastened the door, and a bear walked in. Probably smelt the dishes I'd forgotten to clean up the night before, and came in to investigate. Like his damn' cheek! He hadn't noticed me yet, in the dim light, and was busy lickin' the jam off one of the dishes. What bothered me was that when he'd pushed his way in, the door had swung shut again, and there wasn't any way he could get out without me openin' the door for him. The windows was too high and too smal for him to get through

"I sure was in a pretty tight corner, shut in with a full-grown grizzly in a small cabin. An' what made it worse, my gun was hangin' on the wall, over the table, about ten feet away. Ten feet ain't no great distance under most circumstances, but when it separates you from your only weapon, and a very live bear stands between, it seems like a thousand miles. Well, the only thing I could do at first was to keep still, an', beheve me,

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I did that. Just so soon as that blasted burglar realized that the man of the house was at home and awake, I might as well say my prayers, and they'd have to be pretty short. There was a slim chance that he might take it into his big head to wander over to the other side of the cabin, an' I had to bank on that chance because it was the only one, barring an earthquake, that I could think of, an' earthquakes are rare and inefficient in this part of the world.

"I'd just about thrown that chance into the discard and invited the old boy to do his worst, when my ear caught a thick, soft 'drip—drip' from the far corner. It was still kinda dark over there, but it came to me that that gooey sound could only come from molasses, an' that some mighty kind-hearted angel must have pushed Mr. Bear against the molasses can as he came through the door, and he'd tipped it over. About the same moment, a whuff of sweetness must have reached the grizzly, for he swung his head round and snuffed the air for a moment, then made straight for that dark and sticky corner.

"That seemed to be the zero hour for me. It was up to me to get busy and to be mighty quiet about it. Noiseless action was the watchword. Fortunately, the bear now had his back to me, but he'd be round like a shot if he heard the slightest suspicious noise. Believe

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me, I moved along that bunk as if it was balanced over a precipice. Finally, I got to the head of it and stepped over onto the table. Just as I had lifted the rifle off the nail, my foot happened to rub against a tin cup and push it over the edge of the table. The noise sounded to me like a ton o' brick falling on a tin roof, and evidently it sort of startled the bear too, for he was round like a flash and up on his hind legs facin' me. With his villainous little eyes glaring at me, and his mouth wide open, and his head touchin' the rafters, he was about the most uncomfortable-lookin' nightmare I'd ever run up against. However, this was a different kind of a proposition. I had my gun in my hand, and I let him have it where it would do most good—to me. Even then, I wasn't takin' any chances. As he pitched forward, I took a flyin' leap over him and bolted out the door. I gave him a few minutes to think it over, before I had a look at him through the window, but he was dead all right, an' he seemed to be sprawled pretty well all over my cabin floor."

"Did I understand you to say," enquired the Warden, in a suspiciously polite tone of voice, "that this happened in your cabin? Or was it maybe a sort of pipe-dream?"

The other, for answer, spat contemptuously into the fire.

"Well," said the Warden, "you needn't get mad about

it. It might have happened to you, at that. I mind me of a bear——"

Here the visitor interrupted with a dense snort.

The Warden turned around. "Well?" he asked "What about it?"

"What about what? I didn't say anythin'."

"You intimated quite a lot. However, this happens to be a real bear yarn." He glanced around suspiciously, but the other's face was a complete blank. "Bears," he continued, "sure are queer cattle. I came back to my cabin one morning early, after spendin' a good part of the night roundin' up a bunch of horses that weren't satisfied with perfectly good feed but had wandered half way up a mountain side lookin' for worse. I found them in the end, an' brought them back. They was tired by that time, and meek as lambs. Well, when I got to the cabin it was round three o'clock. The moon was low just sittin' like a big silver ball on top of one of the peaks, she was full at that time. I pushed the door open an' dropped the saddle on the floor. It made a good deal of noise, naturally, but there wasn't anyone there whose beauty sleep was goin' to be spoiled, or I thought there wasn't.

"I was wrong. Old Beezlehub was there, madder than hops, and actin' like a hyin' cyclone. He was one of the biggest grizzlies I ever clapped eyes on, an' he'd

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climbed into my bunk, after makin' a night of it in the cabin. First I saw of him, he was standin' on the edge of the bunk, with the moonlight shinin' in his eyes and on his teeth and on those damn' big claws. He sprang at me. I yelled blue murder and shoved the table at him. It was covered with tin pans and cups, a pot full of beans, an' a nice assortment of canned stuff, pepper an' salt, and other odds and ends. Luckily for me, when this avalanche came down on him, the red pepper caught him squarely in the eyes and splashed down into his nostrils. Well, you never saw anything like the way that bear behaved. If he had been mad before, he was now a ravin' lunatic. He went round and round the cabin, sneezin' like hell, stirrin' all my belongings up into a sort of whirlpool, and so fast that he made me dizzy. I was up on top of the stove at this time an' had to hang on to the stovepipe to keep from falling off. About the same moment we both seemed to get the bright idea that the air was perhaps better outside. Anyway, I made for the door as he climbed through the window. I was so busy attendin' to my own affairs that I hadn't noticed what he was up to, an' after I had got through the door and slammed it after me, I ran round the corner of the cabin, just in time to meet Mr. Bear comin' through the window. I yelled and he growled, but by this time we both seemed to have had enough of each other, so we beat it in opposite directions."

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Glancing at the other member of the party, and correctly interpreting the expression of his face, I thought I had better butt in before he had a chance to unburden his soul. In fact, I was in such a hurry that I had not time to choose my words with care.

"That," I said, "is a very engaging story. You must have had quite an amusing time with that bear."

"Amusing?" questioned the Warden. "Hell! you wouldn't have found it very amusing, if you had been there."

"You're perfectly right," I said. "Perhaps what I had in mind was that the bear was having an amusing time; but even that doesn't seem to have been strictly true. I've often been struck with the capacity of a grizzly for taking punishment. I wasn't thinking so much of red pepper as bullets in what are usually considered vital parts of the anatomy. I remember reading of an incident on the Missouri, described in one of the early western narratives. A party of men, all skillful hunters, were paddling up-stream. This, I should explain, was back in the early part of the last century, the days of the muzzle loader. As they approached a point of land, they saw a bear crouching in the long grass not far from the river. The wind was blowing toward them, and they were able to land, creep around in the shelter of a little hill, and get within forty paces of the grizzly before he became aware of them.

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"Four of the men fired and each hit the bear, two, as it was afterwards found, in the lungs. The only effect it appeared to have was to throw him into a furious rage. He sprang up and rushed at them. As he got near, the other two men also fired, and both scored hits, one broke his shoulder. This seemed to have no more effect than the first shots. Before any of the party could reload the guns, the grizzly was after them, and they ran as they had never run before towards the river. They reached the water's edge not a moment too soon. The bear was almost on top of them. Two leaped into the canoe and pushed out into the stream, the other four scattered right and left and hid in the willows. They now had time to reload, and succeeded in wounding the grizzly again, but still this only served to increase his fury. Catching sight of two of them, he chased them so closely that their only means of escape was to leap from a twenty-foot bank into the water. The bear immediately followed them, and was rapidly overtaking them when one of the two who had remained on the bank managed to send a ball through his brain. This at last got to a vital spot. When they dragged the body ashore, they found that he had been wounded in no less than eight places, any one of which would have proved serious, if not fatal, to an animal less tenacious of life than a grizzly."

"Yes," said the Warden, "they're hard to kill. And

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they're mighty strong. An old-timer, who remembered the days when buffalo were still common on the prairies, told me once that he shot a full-grown bull, and rode off to get help to cut it up. When he returned, the bull was gone. He knew that it was dead when he left it, so that it could not have gone of its own accord. Looking around, he saw that the carcass had been dragged away by a grizzly bear. He followed the trail for over a mile, and then discovered the huge body in a shallow pit the bear had dug for it. It must have weighed considerably over half a ton.

"You never know what a grizzly'll do. Sometimes he'll attack you, and sometimes he'll run away from you, and sometimes he seems to treat you with contempt. A couple of men and a boy were out after a bear one time. Instead of surprising the bear, he surprised them; caught them with their pants down, as the saying is; and they beat it as hard as they could go, the men in front and the boy tagging on behind. By and by, the boy began to tire. He was so out of breath by this time that he could not call out to his companions, and they thought he was close behind. Finally, completely done up, he fell face down on the ground. The grizzly, who had almost overtaken him, reared up on his hind legs, looked down for a moment on the kid, and then bounded over him and went after the men. I've often wondered just what

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idea that bear had when he let the boy be. Was it just the usual impulse not to worry a dead enemy, but to go after the living? Or had he, maybe, some queer animal feeling that this was only a kind of cub, and he'd better go after something more his own size?

"I remember hearing of a trapper who was returning from a tour of his lines. It had been raining for several days, and was pretty heavy going, so he foolishly cached his gun in the fork of a tree, intending to pick it up on his way back. He'd just about completed his round, feeling kind of disgusted; he'd drawn nothing but blanks, and, to make things worse, he'd just passed a young stag, with his gun a mile away and nothing much in camp for supper. He was grouching away to himself, wondering what the third misfortune was going to be, when he pretty nearly walked into a grizzly. 'This,' he thought to himself, 'is it, all right, and good and plenty, too.' He and the bear were so surprised that they stopped for a moment and stared. Then the trapper came to and beat it back down the trail, with the grizzly behind. Through a creek they splashed, and up the other side, the man knew he hadn't a dog's chance in a race with a bear, and his gun was where it wasn't any use to him. The grizzly didn't seem to have got into its stride, but he knew it could overtake him whenever it chose to do so. His one and only chance was to get up into a tree,

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and as bad luck would have it—this was sure one of his off days—he was travelling through the kind of small timber a grizzly could pull up by the roots. Presently he began to realize that the bear was putting on more speed, or else he himself was tiring. Anyway the time had come to get off the trail while the going was good. He picked out the best of a poor lot of willows and shinned up it as fast as he could go. It was so small, it swayed with his weight. 'This,' he thought to himself, 'is where I make a meal for a hungry grizzly.' At that moment the bear arrived underneath. The hunter wished he lived in the good old days when people knew how to make themselves invisible or turn into something else. At that moment, there wasn't any animal he wouldn't rather be than himself. He braced himself for the shock, when the bear would begin to shake him out of his perch, and it flashed across his mind that years before, when he was a boy, he and a coon had been in the same situation, only then the coon had been up a tree and he at the foot. It struck him all of a sudden that maybe the coon had had something to complain of. All these thoughts passed through his mind in a jiffy, as the bear arrived at the foot of his tree. Then he nearly fell off with surprise, for that old grizzly passed beneath him and lumbered on up the trail, without halting, and without even a glance at him, in full view and only about

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fifteen feet above it. No, sir, there's no accounting for the ways of a bear."

We sat around the camp-fire for a while, smoking, and each occupied with his own thoughts.

"There was a bear story," I said, "that I remember hearing a good many years ago. The man was an Indian, who was acting as guide and hunter to a party of travellers, in the early days of Western Canada. One day, he came in to the camp, trembling with excitement. 'I have been in great danger!' he cried, 'I have seen the grizzly bears! They were near, near!' After he had calmed his nerves with a pipe, he told what had happened. He had wandered up a stream looking for game, but hadn't any luck. On his way back, when a few hundred yards from the camp, he heard a rustling in the underbrush, and, thinking the horses had strayed, turned aside to drive them back. In place of the horse, however, he found himself face-to-face with an enormous grizzly, who was tearing open the rotten trunk of a tree in search of insects. On the appearance of the Indian she advanced upon him, growling and with uncurled lips and gleaming teeth. The noise brought two half-grown bears to her support.

This was pretty heavy odds, but the Indian, an old and experienced hunter, stood his ground, and as the old bear came within two or three yards of him, he

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suddenly threw up his arms. This was a familiar device of the natives, and had the effect of making the animal stop and sit up on her hind legs, giving a chance for a steady shot. The Indian took deliberate aim and pulled the trigger, but, to his dismay, the trigger missed fire. He pulled the second trigger and that cap also was a dud. The bear for some reason had not attacked him and as he stood his ground, she finally dropped down on her four feet and returned to her interrupted meal, followed by the others.

"However, they kept a watchful eye upon him and if he made the slightest attempt to move, one bear or another would rush towards him, growling fiercely. This continued for some time, but at length they evidently concluded that he was not worth further attention and devoted themselves seriously to breaking up the rotten logs. He managed to steal off, but, not knowing enough to let well enough alone, made up his mind to have another shot at them. When well out of sight, he stopped, poured fresh powder into the nipples of his gun and re-capped it. He then crept cautiously round so as to approach the bears from another quarter. They were still in the same place. Crouching behind a natural barricade of fallen trees, he took careful aim at the old bear and fired. Again both barrels missed fire, and the three grizzlies, aroused by the snapping of the caps,

looked around, saw the hunter, and rushed up to the barricade, growling and showing their teeth. They did not attempt to force their way through the barricade, but watched him as before, and threatened to attack him whenever he moved. At last, they appeared to think he had been sufficiently intimidated, and turning their backs on him, made off into the heart of the woods."

"That Indian," said the Warden, "had much better luck than he deserved. He was a fool to attack one grizzly with a muzzle-loader, let alone three. It was fortunate for him that his gun did miss fire. He would probably only have wounded the old bear, and then all three would have set upon him."

"Well," I said, "probably you're right. Anyway, I think it's time to turn in for the night."

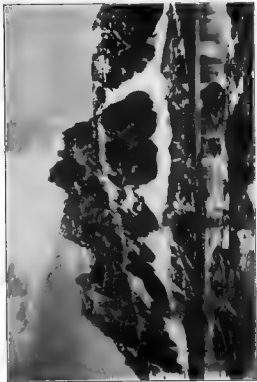
CHAPTER XII.

THE GLORY OF THE TONQUIN



THE FOLLOWING morning, we made our way down-stream to the mouth of Meadow Creek and climbed the steep but admirable trail to the Tonquin Valley. It reminded me of the Bright Angel Trail at the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. It winds up and up and up, zig-zagging through young jack-pine and then through larger timber, and as one climbs one gets occasional glimpses up and down the valley of the Miette; the horizon widens and one looks over into the valley of the Athabaska, behind the nearby peaks and ranges rise others and still others, majestic monarchs of the Rockies, indescribably awe-inspiring.

BUT no feeling of awe could survive the sight of Robert's long face, as it came slowly around the last bend of the trail. He had given a snort of disgust when the first steep rise opened before him. He had been there before and his soul loathed the prospect. He climbed doggedly, if one may say that of a horse—but



The Ramparts, Tongue Valley

fell gradually behind, as if abhorring the company in which he found himself. As we made our way towards the summit we could hear from time to time his screams of indignation far down the trail. A relentless fate made it necessary that he should go on climbing and climbing, under a heavy load, on a very hot day, but he would tell the world what an assinine lot of imbeciles were this restless bunch ahead. When we finally welcomed him sarcastically on the summit, the language that could be read in the gleam of his eyes and the curl of his lip would be quite unfit to print.

If the view from the Meadow Creek trail was magnificent, what can I say of the sight that burst upon our eyes as we came up over the top—the matchless panorama of the Tonquin Valley, guarded by the giant peaks of the Ramparts and holding in its bosom amethyst lakes surrounded by emerald pastures? We rode silently down into the valley, understanding why painters had tried to put it upon canvas and had failed. There were things there that no painter's brush could hope to reproduce.

We spent the night in the Warden's comfortable cabin, built on the summit of a little hill in the heart of the valley, and the following day climbed some of the near-by mountains. The summit of Clitheroe offered a particularly fine point from which to study and enjoy

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the Tonquin. As I scrambled down its side, which seemed to be entirely made up of very loose rocks ranging in size from pebbles to slabs the size of a house, a couple of bull-caribou came out on one of the lower slopes. At that moment, a great boulder that had been hanging perilously on the edge of a shelf, and that I had disturbed in passing, went crashing down the mountain-side. The caribou looked up in alarm, then turned about and flew down the slope, a wonderful picture of grace and speed.

In the evening, after we had driven the mosquitoes out of the cabin with Chinese incense, we reviewed our journey and agreed that it had been well worth while. It had taken eighteen days, and we still had another day's travel to bring us back to Jasper. We had travelled around in a very eccentric circle, from Jasper down the Athabaska and up the Snake Indian to the northern boundary of the Park, then down Rock Slide Creek to the Smoky, up the Smoky and over Vimy Ridge to Souchez Creek and Twin Tree Lake, down Julian Creek and over Byng Pass to a branch of the Snake Indian, over Maynard Pass to another branch of the Snake Indian, and by way of Idaleen Pass to the upper waters of the Snaring, over Thornton Pass to Dominion Creek, and by the Skyline Trail to the Miette, and up the Meadow Creek trail to the Tonquin Valley. Back to

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Jasper headquarters we would ride in the morning.

In the meantime, we had one more evening to spend together. I think we all felt a certain regret that it had to be spent in the cabin, rather than around a camp-fire. There is magic in a camp-fire, and very special magic in a camp fire in the mountains. We relax on the ground, perhaps after a hard day's riding,—enjoy the day's real smoke,—for the morning's pipe and that at midday are too hurried, and there is no real pleasure in smoking on horseback, chat and swap yarns, —or drop back into silence and listen with deep appreciation to the voices of the mountains, the distant, muffled roar of an avalanche the drowsy murmur of a near-by stream, whose pebbles seem to carry on an interminable conversation, the deeper note of a waterfall, the sighing of the evening breeze through the pine-tops. Animal life seems curiously silent in the mountains, if one excepts the unfriendly and unwelcome note of the mosquito; the voices of the mountains are the voices of what is called rather incorrectly, perhaps—inanimate nature.

We smoked in silence for a time in the cabin, while the Warden brought his diary up to date, Bill mended a tear in his nether garments, and I simply loafed and let my mind go back over the very happy days we had spent together, jungling in Jasper. Pictures of trail and camp followed one another in endless procession: a curious

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network of game-trails between Dominion Creek and the base of Mount Bridgeland, an inspiring view from the shoulder of Bridgeland, with the long, winding valley below, and all about us a wonderful relief map of Jasper Park, or a good bit of it, ranges and great peaks, rivers and waterfalls, the matchless grace of a bull caribou on the skyline, who studied our party for a time, and then made his leisurely way down a very precipitous hillside to the valley below, an eagle soaring far above the valley of the Miette, Shamrock ambling along the trail, unconscious of the ridiculous picture he presented with a fireweed sticking out of each corner of his mouth.

Shamrock was partial to firewoods, a fire scare in the valley of the Snaring, which alarmed us for a time, but fortunately turned out to be nothing more serious than the reaction of water from a hot spring running down into an ice-cold creek; the eerie whistle of a marmot at the summit of a mountain pass; cunning Robert finding some protection from the flies, at least on his under parts, by straddling a thick bush; the view from Thornton Pass down the valley of the Snaring and up to the Colonel and a group of other fine peaks, Bill, lying on his back in the tent swatting mosquitoes with a wet towel; Bill again, swarming up to the top of the last live spruce, searching for a practicable route down from the Skyline Trail through miles of burnt timber, a forest of what

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looked like huge telegraph poles, standing so close together that it was often difficult to get through—fire had stripped away branches and bark, leaving nothing but the bare trunk, a beautiful stag, with antlers in the velvet, lying among the windfalls above the Miette and watching us unconcernedly as we filed past him at twenty paces, the aromatic smells of the mountain forest; footing it hot and dusty, through burnt timber; Robert, the irrepressible, rubbing flies off my back with the side of his face, probably in the expectation that I would reciprocate, an expectation that was not realized, a bad piece of trail opposite Mount Chown, and my lucky escape from a crushed leg—a good trail horse, fortunately seldom crushes his rider's leg like Balaam's ass, and then only when he side-slips on a boulder, a group of caribou on the flats of the Smoky, sombre vistas through the jack-pine, and the curiously attractive quality of other vistas through a burnt forest, where each tree stood out, black as ebony, the incomparable delight of a drink from an ice-cold brook after a very hot and dusty climb.

The warden broke into my meditations. He had finished his diary, and got up to stretch himself with a huge sigh of relief.

"Thank God, that's finished!" said he. "Why do people pride themselves on their ability to keep a diary going for years? They ought rather to be ashamed of

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themselves. They call it stickativeness. It's nothing but force of habit."

"No man in his senses," added Bill, "would keep a diary, unless it was part of his job. They're afraid we might get bored out here, with so much time on our hands and nothin' much to do, so they make us keep a diary."

"Don't you find it lonely out here at times?" I asked the Warden.

"Lonely? Why, no. I have my work to do, and in the evenings, if I happen to be here in the cabin, there is usually something to read. I wouldn't exchange the peace of this Tonquin Valley for all the luxuries of your noisy cities. As a matter of fact, there are always some people up here in the summer. What I'm afraid of is that it will become too popular, when it becomes known what a gorgeous place it is, and then they'll be building a motor road up here, and perhaps a hotel."

"God forbid!" said Bill.

"As a matter of fact," continued the Warden, "I think I prefer winter to summer in the Tonquin. There are no flies or mosquitoes or tourists, and if you want to see the Ramparts and the valley at their very best, you must come here in midwinter. Also, it's a wonderful place for skiing."

"What kind of people do you get up here in the

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summer?" I asked. "It's a long trail, and a fairly hard one for anyone unaccustomed to riding, from headquarters up into the Tonquin."

"Oh, mostly mountain climbers and artists," replied the Warden. "There was an artist here last summer, a very interesting chap, who made a great many sketches of the Ramparts. He brought one in to the cabin, one day, and asked me what I thought of it. I looked at it and admired it, but said, 'You've got too many peaks in your picture.'"

"He glanced over my shoulder at the picture. 'Too many!' he drawled. 'Oh, no, my dear fellow' There may be more than you can see over there, but if you think I can't improve on the works of the Almighty, you're quite mistaken.' "

The Warden's mind went back to the question of loneliness.

"This business of crowding together in towns," he said, "is nothing but habit, and a very bad habit. A man is ever so much happier when he's out on his own, living by himself in his own cabin. Perhaps, occasionally, that feeling can be carried a little too far. There was an old-timer in Alaska, who had lived alone in his cabin, by the side of a lake, for years. There was no one else within many miles of him. After a while, he was taken ill. Fortunately, a trapper happened along

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about that time and managed to get him in to a hospital. Pretty hard work, too, it must have been! Well, the old boy stayed in the hospital for some weeks. As soon as he began to pick up a little strength, nothing would do but he must get back to his own diggings. There had been a suggestion that, because he was growing old and feeble, it might be a good thing for him to get into some kind of an institution, a kind of old men's home. "No, you don't," said he. "I won't have anything to do with your damned home." If I have to die, by God, I'll die in my own cabin!" So they took him back home, and left him there. He was slow in getting back his strength, but managed to get around and make a living. But then he began to realize that he was going blind. Gradually, his sight began to leave him. Ever so often, someone would turn up at the cabin, but he told them nothing, was careful to keep his secret. It was a bitter problem for the old man. He knew that, once his eyesight was gone, he must depend upon other people. He could not live alone, blind, in that country. Evidently, he thought it out carefully, and made his decision. One evening, he got out his boat and rowed out into the middle of the lake. The boat drifted ashore, empty."

The following morning, we packed up and started down the trail to headquarters. I was complimenting Bill on the neat job he had made of his pants.

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"Well," he said, "they look a little more respectable than those the Indian made out of a Hudson's Bay blanket. He made them like chaps, closed in front and open behind. Went hunting in November. A trader met him coming back, his horse loaded with game. The Indian was leading the horse, wearing a fur cap, muffler and warm gloves, but quite exposed behind. 'My God, Dave' said the trader, 'your back must be cold.' 'Naw,' replied Dave. 'Indian's back just like white man's face.' "

The Warden treated the story with disdain. As a matter of fact, he was feeling a little peevish, having had trouble in rounding up the horses in the early morning. They had wandered very far afield. Some had got up into Maccarib Pass, the rest high up on one of the mountains.

The journey down to the Athabaska was uneventful, except that one of the horses took fright and bolted at the sight of a weird little tent pitched in the middle of a muskeg in the Tonquin. We found it occupied by a wandering Swede, travelling on foot from California to Alaska. How or why he had wandered up into the Tonquin, we did not enquire, but wished him a safe arrival in Alaska and went on our way.

Toward evening, we were once more back at the Lodge. We had a much-needed hot bath, got into

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clean clothes, thoroughly enjoyed an excellent dinner, and had a final smoke and chat on the verandah. Very reluctantly and sadly, I said good-bye to my companions of the trail, Bill and the Warden. I had already taken leave of those other companions, Shamrock, Rastus, Black Prince, Echo, Rod, Buck, Blaze and Robert the Devil—God bless them all!

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